LIVES AND LEGENDS OF ENGLISH SAINTS

L. M. SHORT

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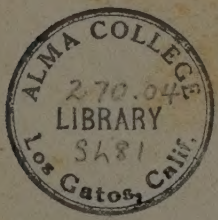
BY

L. M. SHORTT

"Go where thou wilt, seek whatsoever thou wilt, thou shalt not find a higher way above, nor a safer way below, than the way of the Holy Cross."

THOMAS À KEMPIS



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TO

SUSAN

PREFACE

IN presenting to the public this treatise on the "Lives and Legends of English Saints," which is intended to form a prelude to further volumes on the holy men and women belonging to the other parts of the United Kingdom, I should like to say a few words, first as to its title and arrangement, and lastly as to its subject.

I am well aware that there are many persons who will accept the *life* of a Saint with comparative readiness, but who will exclaim in horror at the credulity of those who can accept a *legend* or a *miracle*. And yet their attitude, in my humble opinion at least, appears somewhat irrational.

I naturally do not wish to imply that *every*—I might almost say *any*—legend is to be accepted without reserve, but I would affirm that almost every legend contains some germ at least of truth, in that it indicates —though often in an allegorical form—some characteristic of the Saint in question, or, more rarely, a poetical exposition of some familiar truth of Holy Scripture.

And as regards miracles, I would suggest that whilst very many are obviously capable of the very simplest explanation, and whilst others, such as the cure by S. John of Beverley of his Lenten companion, are manifestly to be attributed to a medical knowledge

superior to that which was common in a comparatively barbarous age, whose credulity naturally ascribed to the supernatural all that was beyond its comprehension, and in this case claimed for the treatment a period of incredibly short duration, I think that if there are still others that surpass our understanding, we should hesitate before we condemn them as absurdities. Whilst there is still so much in the material world before which, as finite beings, we are obliged freely to acknowledge the limitations of our intellects, it is surely unreasonable to refuse at least an equivalent confession with regard to matters that far more assuredly lie beyond our ken.

And now a few words as to the arrangement of this volume.

It is, in the first place, with considerable diffidence that I have divided it into two parts—a division which might suggest that I desired to attribute to those Saints in the earlier portion a sanctity superior to that which I would ascribe to those in the latter. May I at once disclaim any such intention? I have placed in the first part primarily those holy men and women who have invariably been ranked amongst the champions of the Catholic Faith, and I have added to them others to whom are attached such legends as, in my opinion, seemed the most beautiful, the most representative, and perhaps sometimes the most quaint. Any further discrimination on my part has been, I may safely say, entirely involuntary.

As regards the classification of those various Saints included in Part I, according to the date of their death

—or perhaps it would be more correct to say, in this instance, of their entrance into eternal life—this method has been adopted with a view to obviate, as far as possible, that repetition of the various details of history, both ecclesiastical and political, which would otherwise have proved unavoidable.

There are, moreover, two omissions to which exception may be taken by my readers.

The first is the omission of practically all mention of the Cornish Saints, and in this connection I would only say that, since in the majority of cases these Saints of Welsh or Irish extraction spent only a limited portion of their lives in the land of their adoption, it has seemed to me more appropriate to assign to them their places amongst those other Saints appertaining to the land of their birth.

Others, again, may express surprise at the total neglect of such notable Saints as England's Patron, S. George, S. Augustine, S. Paulinus, S. Birinus, S. Anselm, S. Hugh of Lincoln, S. Oswald of York, and many others who did yeoman service to the Church of England. I can only explain that it is with deep regret that the limited space at my disposal has compelled me to confine myself entirely to *native* English Saints. Even amongst these latter I fear lest some may possibly have been omitted, whilst in the case of those most fully described I have in many cases been obliged to omit all but the most important circumstances in their history and to insert only such legends concerning them as appeared to be the most characteristic and the most indispensable.

And, lastly, as to the Saints themselves. I have not attempted in these pages to represent them as models of perfection. They belong to various ages and to various stations in life, and most, if not all of them, have their failings, though these belong in many instances chiefly to the period in which they lived. Take, as an example, the ambition that was almost forced upon the ecclesiastic who, owing to his superior monastic education, was elevated, almost of necessity, to the rank of statesman. Besides, it is not always perfection that most appeals to us. Their merits, such as their asceticism, with the prolonged fasts and lack of cleanliness which in those days were regarded as an almost inherent part of the religious life, and which won for them the esteem and admiration of their contemporaries, are not always those which most arouse our modern sympathies. And yet I would claim that in each of them we shall discover, if we will seek it, some virtue that may well be imitated, and that we shall find ourselves constrained to acknowledge that, with all their human frailties, they form a heritage of which, both as Catholics and as Englishmen, we may be justly proud.

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LIVES AND LEGENDS OF ENGLISH SAINTS

PART I

CHAPTER I

EARLY SAINTS

"For Martyrdoms, I reckon them amongst Miracles; because they seem to exceed the strength of human nature; and I may do the like of superlative and admirable Holiness of Life."—BACON.

S. ALBAN

BRITISH PROTOMARTYR *d. June 22nd, c.* 304

"In Britain's fruitful Isle was holy Alban born,"

and it is the city of Verulam, the ancient Roman city of which only some few fragments remain, beside the modern town of S. Albans, which bears his name, that lays claim to having been the birthplace of this early British martyr.

It was on a day in the spring or early summer of the year 304, while the Christians of Britain were suffering beneath the persecutions of Diocletian, that a certain Christian priest, usually known to us by the name of S. Amphibalus, who was fleeing before his heathen pursuers, knocked at the door of one Alban,

a soldier in the Roman army, and besought a refuge that was willingly granted to him. Whether it was for days or weeks that the fugitive thus evaded all pursuit seems uncertain, but it was for long enough, in any case, for the instructions and the saintly example of the guest to effect the sincere conversion of his host, who, though he had hitherto lived a heathen, already bore a high repute for the uprightness and generosity of his character.

But at length tidings arrived that word of the hiding-place of Amphibalus had reached the magistrate's ears, and that soldiers were already on their way to apprehend the Christian and to conduct him before the judgment-seat. And now, in this moment of severest trial, the courage of the convert seems to have exceeded that of his teacher: for when the Roman guard entered the house, it was to find, not the priest Amphibalus, but Alban, who, though he had only so recently been enrolled a Soldier of the Cross, now presented himself to his captors in the habit or mantle of his master, whose escape he had in some manner effected, and cheerfully allowed himself to be dragged to what he realized to be certain death.

The magistrate, at the moment when the prisoner was brought before him, was engaged in offering sacrifice to his idols, and deeply incensed by Alban's open profession of Christianity, as well as by his connivance in the successful escape, which had now been discovered, of the Priest he sought, ordered the prisoner to be dragged, bound as he was, before his false gods, angrily warning him that because he had sheltered a

man who was both a rebel and sacrilegious, he should in his own person endure the penalty that had been allotted to the former, unless by taking his part in the sacrifice, he would renounce his newly confessed Faith : a command to which Alban straightly refused obedience.

" Of what race and family are you ? " inquired the magistrate.

" How can it concern you of what stock I come ? " was the bold reply. " But if you desire to know the truth concerning my religion, be it known to you that I am now a Christian, bound by Christian obligations."

" I asked you of your name," insisted the offended judge. " Tell it me, I bid you, without delay."

" I am called, by my parents, Alban, and I worship the true and living God, who created all things. These sacrifices which you offer to demons can neither profit those to whom they are offered, nor avail to procure the wishes and desires of those that offer them. On the contrary, those who offer sacrifice to these false images shall receive for their recompense the everlasting torments of Hell." And at length the judge, finding that even the most cruel scourging could exercise upon the confessor no stronger influence than his previous threats, gave orders for his execution.

Rejoicing greatly in that he was thus esteemed worthy of the crown of martyrdom, S. Alban was now led, down the hill on which Verulam stood, to the little bridge, which spanned the River Ver, that traversed the flower-strewn meadow. At this point, however, the little procession encountered such a crowd, which was there gathered together to witness this spectacle, that

there seemed no possibility of a road being opened, even by the Roman soldiers, that would allow the prisoner to cross the bridge. Whereupon the Saint, impatient at the delay thus caused in the attainment of his martyrdom, pausing a moment on the bank to pray, caused the little river to roll back on either side, and thus procured a passage by which he and his guards might pass over dry-shod: a sight which so impressed the executioner, who walked beside him, that, flinging away his axe, he openly professed himself a Christian and expressed his desire to share in the death of his intended victim.

Up the grass-clad slope that faced the ancient city of Verulam, the little procession, attended by the thronging multitude, wended its way to the appointed place of execution, and here, so the legend tells, during the brief delay caused by the necessary selection of a second executioner, a bubbling fountain burst forth at the Saint's feet, in answer to his intercession, to quench his parching thirst. Then, bowing his neck willingly before the executioner's stroke, S. Alban won, by his noble confession even unto death, the crown of life that he had so eagerly desired, whilst the soldier, who had refused to become the instrument of his death, immediately afterwards sealed with his own blood the courageous profession of the Christian Faith which he had so lately made.

A handsome Church was erected in the year 401, by S. Lupus of Troyes, over the place of S. Alban's burial, upon the spot where he had suffered martyrdom, but this, in the course of time, seems to have com-

pletely disappeared, till, at the close of the eighth century, the very spot where the Martyr's relics lay had passed from human memory.

In the year 793, however, Offa, King of Mercia, who, in his desire to expiate the guilt of his participation in the murder of Ethelbert, King of East Anglia, had vowed to found a Monastery, was divinely instructed, in a dream, to visit the site of ancient Verulam, where, close at hand, he would find, enclosed in a wooden coffin, the remains of the early British Saint, which he was bidden to translate to a more worthy resting-place. And thus it was that on the site where S. Alban, nearly five hundred years before, witnessed a good confession, a Benedictine Monastery arose, which during the Danish invasion and the Norman Conquest passed through many harsh vicissitudes, till, in the year 1115, the present great Abbey Church was consecrated, in the presence of Henry I and of his Queen, to the glory of God and in the name of England's great Protomartyr, S. Alban.

HELENA

EMPRESS *d. circa* 326

Though it is an almost universally accepted fact that S. Helena was of British extraction, considerable doubt exists as to her parentage. Some writers maintain her to have been of humble origin, the daughter of an inn-keeper, whilst others allege that she was the daughter of Coël or Coilus, a British prince, whose name

is still preserved in that of the city of Colchester, which he both fortified and beautified.

However this may be, it is at least certain that she married Constantine Chlorus, then a soldier in the Roman army, and afterwards Emperor, and that she bore him, about the year 274, a son who afterwards became famous as Constantine the Great.

The legend concerning the conversion of this latter Emperor is almost too well known to need repetition. It relates that in the year 313, on the eve of an important battle against the rival Emperor Maxentius, Constantine beheld in the noonday sky a shining Cross, with the inscription: "By this shalt thou conquer!" and that that same night, as he slept, our Lord appeared to him, bearing the same Holy Sign, and bade him fashion for himself a standard in the form of a Cross, which should constantly ensure to him the success of his arms. Rising from sleep, Constantine, in obedience to this twice-repeated warning, fashioned the famous Labarum, which, according to the Divine promise, on the following day preceded his troops to a decisive victory, whereupon the Emperor, who, according to the old legend, was still ignorant of the facts of Christianity, summoned to himself certain Jewish teachers, who informed him that many years before a Holy Prophet had died, between two thieves, on a similar Tree, which had been subsequently buried by the Jews, who, by their rejection and Crucifixion of this sinless Sufferer, had brought upon themselves the destruction of their city under the Emperors Titus and Vespasian.

Filled with an earnest desire to recover the Holy Cross, Constantine appealed to his mother, who appears to have become a convert of Christianity at about the same period as her son, and who at once, though she was already in her seventy-ninth year, undertook, with this object, a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

On her arrival in the Holy City, the Empress, to her bitter disappointment, could find no one to guide her in her search. At length, however, an aged Jew, better versed than his fellow-citizens in the traditions of his country, informed her that the pagan conquerors of Jerusalem, in their hatred of Christianity, had erected a temple to Venus on the site of Calvary, and that if, as their custom was, the Jews had buried the instruments of Crucifixion, which they regarded as unclean, close to the spot where they were used, diligent search would probably reveal them beneath this heathen place of worship.

Armed with the authority of her son Constantine, S. Helena at once ordered the demolition of this temple of Venus, and the excavations that were subsequently made beneath it soon brought to light, as she had hoped, three crosses, and also the Title placed by Pilate over the central Cross. As, however, this Title was unattached and lay by itself, at some distance apart, the difficulty still remained of determining which of the three was the True Cross. This doubt, however, was speedily overcome, when, as the three Crosses were being carried into Jerusalem, their bearers encountered, at the gate of the city, a funeral procession. By the advice of S. Macarius, the Bishop of Jerusalem, each

cross in turn was laid beside the corpse. The first two had no effect, but when, at the contact of the third, the dead body arose, perfectly restored to health, no possible doubt remained as to the success of S. Helena's quest.

Legend relates that the Cross was then divided into two parts : for the former portion, enclosed in a silver case, the Empress erected a Church on Mount Calvary itself : the second part she carried with her to Byzantium, whence a portion of it was sent by Constantine to Rome, to the Church of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, which was specially built for its reception.

S. Helena herself appears to have died within a few months of her return from Jerusalem.

CHAPTER II

ROYAL SAINTS

" The greater thou art, the more humble thyself,—and thou shalt find favour before the Lord. Many are in high place and of renown, but mysteries are revealed unto the meek."—Ecclus. iii. 18, 19.

S. ETHELBERT

First Christian King of the English *d. February 24th*, 616

So closely interwoven is the history of S. Ethelbert with the early days of the conversion to Christianity of the Anglo-Saxon nation, that it is almost impossible in writing the life of this King not to give what would be perhaps more accurately described as an account of the Mission of S. Augustine.

Very familiar is the story of the young Deacon, who noticed one day in the Roman slave-market certain youths, whose fair faces and golden hair attracted his attention, and whom, on inquiry, he found to be Angles.

" Not Angles should they be, but Angels," was his prompt reply. " But whence come they ? "

" They come from Deira," a name which instantly suggested to the ecclesiastical mind of the Deacon the words " de ira," and filled him with the fervent desire to deliver these fair-haired youths from the wrath of God.

Without delay the Deacon presented himself before the Pope, and begged leave to undertake in person the mission that was so near to his heart ; and the desired permission was granted and the missionary had actually started on his journey, when, influenced by the clamour of the populace, who loved the young ecclesiastic too well to suffer him thus to depart out of their midst, the Pope himself recalled him to Rome.

A few years later this Deacon was himself elected Pope, under the title of Gregory I, or, as he is more commonly called, Gregory the Great ; and no sooner was he able to turn his thoughts away from the affairs of his national Church, than he called to mind the bygone scene in the slave-market, which had left such an indelible impression on his mind, and appointed Augustine, the Prior of the Monastery which he had himself founded upon the Cœlian Hill at Rome, to conduct thither a missionary band of forty monks.

There is no space here to relate how on the journey, inspired by the Gallican priests with dread of the savage nation to which he had been sent, Augustine returned to Rome and begged to be relieved of his mission, or to tell of the gentle rebuke administered by Gregory, who bade him resume, nothing fearing, the task that had been allotted to him ; suffice it to say that soon after Easter in the year 597, Augustine and his forty missionaries, together with certain interpreters from Gaul, landed in Thanet and dispatched messengers to Ethelbert, King of Kent, to

advise him of the good tidings that they brought to him and to his subjects.

As it happened, their arrival in England could scarcely have occurred at a more opportune moment. Ethelbert, the most powerful of the Anglo-Saxon kings, who ruled over the most civilized portion of the Anglo-Saxon race, had recently married Bertha, the daughter of Charibert and granddaughter of Clothair I, and this Christian princess had come to Kent accompanied by her chaplain, Luidhard, recently Bishop of Senlis, with full permission from her husband for the free exercise of her religion.

But notwithstanding the Christianity of his wife, Ethelbert himself was still a heathen, as were all his subjects, for even if the Celtic Church, which still survived in some parts of the country, had attempted the conversion of the foreign invaders, which it certainly does not appear to have done, it is more than doubtful if the proud Saxons would ever have consented to accept the Faith of their conquered enemies.

A few days after Augustine's landing in Thanet, a meeting was arranged between him and the King, who journeyed in royal state to the Isle of Thanet, where, as soon as he had established his court, the Italian monks advanced in solemn procession to advance their cause. The King's reason for preferring thus an open-air conference, appears to have been his fear of witchcraft, which was commonly supposed to be more potent within doors than without.

"They advanced, however," writes the Venerable Bede, "armed not with diabolical but with divine

virtue—bearing as their standard a silver Cross, and beside it a wooden panel on which was painted the image of our Lord and Saviour, and singing, as they moved, litanies, both for their own eternal salvation and for theirs for whose sakes they were now come."

An interpreter then proceeded to explain to the King and to his attendants the object of Augustine's mission, to which explanation Ethelbert made reply as follows : " Fair indeed are the words and the promises that you bring, but because they are new and uncertain I cannot straightway give my assent to them, nor abandon those which I and the English nation have so long observed." But since in conclusion Ethelbert granted the Italian missionaries leave to preach freely wheresoever they would in his dominions, and allotted to their use in Canterbury the little Church of S. Martin, which had recently been restored for the benefit of his wife, they had certainly no cause to complain of the success of their first interview.

" We beseech Thee, O Lord, of Thy mercy, that Thy fury and anger may be removed from this city, and from Thy holy house, for we have sinned," sang the little procession of Italian monks, as, preceded by Cross and banner, it filed through the streets of the ancient city of Canterbury towards the little Church of S. Martin ; and truly a marvellous response was granted to this prayer.

Already on Whitsun Day, 2 June, of the same year, 597, King Ethelbert was himself baptized, and inspired by his influence, as also by the holy example of the Christian missionaries, thousands before long followed

in his steps. In the November of the same year Augustine was consecrated by the Archbishop of Arles to be Archbishop of the English, with Canterbury as his metropolitan See, and finding the Church of S. Martin too small for the growing needs of the Christian community, he obtained permission from the King to restore the ruins of an ancient Christian Church, built within the city walls during the Roman occupation of Britain, on the site of which stands the present Cathedral Church of Canterbury. At about the same time he laid, beyond the walls, the foundation of the Monastery of S. Peter and S. Paul, which now bears the name of its founder.

But in the year 603, S. Augustine was confronted by a task for which his absence of conciliatory tact rendered him singularly ill-adapted—the attempt to bring the Celtic Bishops into line with the ritual of the Roman Church. A preliminary Conference was held at a spot called S. Augustine's Oak, upon the banks of the Severn, but it was scarcely to be wondered at if it met with practically no result, owing to Augustine's somewhat aggressive methods of accusing of heresy these Celtic Bishops, who most certainly owed no allegiance to Rome, seeing that Britain had for some two hundred years ceased to be a Roman province, on account of certain differences that existed between their customs and those of the Roman Church of which he was the ambassador.

Notwithstanding the failure of this first Conference a second was arranged, at which the principal points at issue were, firstly, the threefold immersion practised

by the Roman Church at Holy Baptism as compared with the single immersion employed by the Celts; and secondly, the long-contested controversy between the two Churches as to the manner of fixing the date of Easter. Both Churches had adopted the ruling of the Council of Nice, which appointed that Easter Day must invariably fall upon a Sunday, but whereas the Roman Church had further adopted the more perfect astronomical rule, which had been evolved in 458—a rule of which the Celtic Church, owing to its isolation, had probably never even heard—there was sometimes a whole week's difference in the date of the observance of the Queen of Festivals by the members of the two Churches.

But on their way to this second Conference the Celtic Bishops and clergy, who were perhaps really more averse to yield to the ruling of their Saxon foes than to the more general custom of the Catholic Church, are said to have consulted a certain holy anchorite as to whether they would do right to desert their own traditions for the teaching of S. Augustine.

"If he be a man of God, follow him," replied the Hermit.

"But how shall we assure ourselves of this fact?" was their further question.

"The Lord hath said, 'Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart.' Contrive therefore that he and his people come first to the place of this Synod, and if at your approach he riseth to receive you, hear him with submission; but if he slight you and will not

rise up in your presence, let him also be disregarded by you."

Unfortunately for the success of this second Council, S. Augustine remained seated at the approach of the Celtic Bishops and somewhat abruptly demanded their compliance with the Roman use in the two cardinal points just mentioned, and though he promised, if they would agree to do so, to tolerate all other differences with equanimity, the olive branch that he thus offered was not sufficient to compensate for his unconciliatory manner. It was no wonder that, guided by the advice that they had sought on their journey thither, the Celtic Bishops, saying amongst themselves, " If he will not rise up to us even now, how much more certainly would he contemn us if we were under his subjection," rejected the terms offered by S. Augustine. Thus the long controversy, whose principal effect upon the Church in England was due to the adherence to the Celtic rule of the Monks of S. Columba in Iona, by whose means it spread to the North of England when that region, after the departure of S. Paulinus on the death of King Edwin, was reconverted from the great Scotch monastery, was protracted until the Synod of Whitby in 664, which practically eradicated the whole Celtic episcopacy.

On 26 May, 604, S. Augustine departed this life, and was buried in his still unfinished Monastery of S. Peter and S. Paul, without the walls of Canterbury.

Since his Baptism in 597, Ethelbert had lived as a model King and a most worthy Christian, never ceasing during this period of nearly twenty years to ameliorate

by prudent laws the government of his dominions and to further the conversion of his subjects both by the destruction of their idols and by the substitution of Christian Churches for pagan temples. But on 24 February, 616, Ethelbert died, after a reign of fifty-six years, and was interred in the Abbey Church of S. Peter and S. Paul, beside his first wife, Bertha, and after his death the newly founded Anglo-Saxon Church fell on troublous times. His son, and successor, Eadbald, because he had married his father's widow (the wife whom Ethelbert had married after Bertha's death), renounced and persecuted a Church which prohibited such a union; the other parts of the heptarchy, which had been converted by Augustine and his monks under Ethelbert's influence, relapsed under pagan rulers into idolatry, while their Bishops, who were certainly possessed of no zeal for martyrdom, fled to France, and it is said that it was only a miracle that prevented S. Laurence, the successor of S. Augustine, from following their example. Had he done so the mission sent by Gregory the Great to this country might well have ended in utter failure.

The night before his departure, it so happened that S. Laurence had given orders that his bed should be prepared within the Church of S. Peter and S. Paul. That night, as he lay asleep, S. Peter appeared to him, and after scourging him severely, rebuked him sternly for his intended desertion of the flock that had been committed to his charge.

"Have you," he asked, "forgotten my example, who, for the sake of the little ones whom Christ com-

mended to me as a proof of His love, endured bonds, stripes, prisons, afflictions, and lastly death itself, at the hands of unbelievers ? "

The following morning the Archbishop visited the King, and showed to him the stripes which he had suffered at the hands of the Apostle, whereupon Eadbald, in alarm, abjured his unlawful marriage, forsook his heathen deities, and for the remainder of his life assisted S. Laurence by every means in his power.

S. EDWIN

KING AND MARTYR *d. October 12th*, 633

Desolate, forlorn, and almost in despair, Edwin, the son of Ælla, the late King of Deira, was seated one evening on a bench, in front of the palace of Redwald, King of East Anglia. And truly he had good cause for depression. Driven from his home by Ethelfrith of Bernicia, who, under pretext of acting as guardian to the youthful King, had driven him into exile, and had made various attempts to assassinate him, Edwin had found, as he believed, a secure refuge at the East Anglian court. That very evening, however, secret information had been brought to him to the effect that Ethelfrith, having discovered his hiding-place, had bribed Redwald, who, fearing lest he should involve his whole kingdom in a disastrous war, was resolved to surrender his guest into his enemy's hands.

Suddenly, however, the exiled prince was roused from his melancholy musings by the voice of a stranger,

who had approached him unheard, and who, apparently already informed in some mysterious way of the cause of his dejection, inquired of him what reward he would give to be relieved of his present fears for his personal safety.

"I would give all that I possess," replied Edwin promptly.

"And what if I should assure thee that thou shalt become King and shalt exceed in power and glory all that ever ruled in England before thee?" continued the mysterious visitor.

"No reward that I could give would suffice to express my gratitude for such an assurance," answered the astonished youth.

"And if, moreover, he who promiseth thee such great and bountiful gifts, should likewise give thee wiser counsel concerning thy life and thy salvation, than any that hath been revealed to thine ancestors before thee? Wilt thou submit thyself to his admonitions?" continued the stranger, to whom Edwin willingly promised that he would surrender himself freely to the guidance of so bountiful a teacher.

"When this sign shall be given unto thee, forget not what I have said to thee and delay not the fulfilment of thy pledge"; and with these words, laying his hand for an instant on the young man's forehead, the stranger vanished from his sight.

And even as the young prince still sat pondering over the identity of his recent visitor, the friend, who had before informed him of Redwald's treachery, returned to tell him of the King's changed purpose.

The Queen, unwilling that her husband should stain his honour by so foul a breach of hospitality, had, through her influence, prevailed upon him to dismiss the ambassadors of Ethelfrith with a direct refusal—and thus the first prophecy that Edwin had heard that evening was already fulfilled, and it was not long before the second was likewise verified.

Indignant at this rejection of his proposals, Ethelfrith instantly declared war on Redwald ; a sharp and decisive battle was fought on the banks of the Idle, the usurper was left dead upon the field, and Edwin, his exile ended, found himself at length restored to the throne of his father.

Some ten years passed and nothing happened to remind the young King of the vow that he had made in his adversity ; perhaps it had altogether escaped his memory. About this time, however, his first wife having died, Edwin, who, though a wise ruler, was still a heathen, obtained the consent of Eadbald, King of Kent, to his marriage with his sister Ethelburga, the daughter of Ethelbert, first Christian King of the English, the only stipulation being that the princess should be allowed the free exercise of her religion and should be accompanied to the northern kingdom by her private chaplain, S. Paulinus.

A year later, on Easter Day, in the year 626, a dastardly attack was made on Edwin's life by one Eumer, the paid assassin of Quichelm, King of Wessex, who attempted to stab the King with a poisoned dagger concealed beneath his cloak. The attempt miscarried ; the fatal blow was warded from the King

by a devoted minister who received it in his own breast, and, in gratitude for his deliverance, Edwin consented to allow the Baptism of the daughter, Eanfleda, who had that night been born to him. He undertook, moreover, if he should recover from the injury received through the body of his faithful defender, which, though slight, was nevertheless rendered dangerous by the poison, and if victory should attend his arms in the vengeance that he purposed against Quichelm, to become himself a Christian.

The King recovered, a great battle was fought, the forces of the Wessex King were scattered or slain, and as Edwin returned victorious to his palace, Paulinus, meeting him, and laying his hand upon his forehead, inquired of him if he still remembered his pledge of former years.

"Behold," he added, "you have escaped, by the gift of the Lord, the hands of the enemies whom you feared; you have received by His bounty the kingdom that you desired; take heed that you delay not to fulfil the promise that you have made to accept the Faith and to obey the precepts of Him Who has both delivered you from temporal adversity and exalted you to the honour of a temporal kingdom."

Before, however, publicly announcing his change of religion, the King, with the consent of Paulinus, desired to assemble his nobles and to inquire of them individually their ideas as to this new form of worship.

In due course the Council met at Godmundham, and the first to express an opinion as to the comparative merits of the two religions was Coifi, the arch-

priest of the ancient worship. His verdict must have come as a surprise to many of his former hearers.

"Consider, O King!" he said, "what religion it is that is now preached to us, for I most truly declare to you what I have most certainly learnt, that the religion that we have hitherto professed is of no virtue whatever. Not one of your subjects has devoted himself to the worship of our gods more zealously than myself; yet there are many who receive greater benefits at your hands and who prosper more in that which they transact or acquire; whereas, if the gods had any power, would they not be the more careful to assist one who, like myself, has thus diligently served them? I advise therefore if these new doctrines prove, after due examination, to be better and more substantial, that we hasten, without any delay, to receive them."

Upon this another of the King's nobles rose to his feet and addressed him in the following quaint but beautiful terms.

"The present life of man on earth in comparison to that time which is unknown to us, O King! is as if, when you are seated at supper, in the winter-time, among your captains and your ministers, in a hall where a glowing fire has been lighted, while wintry rain and snow are raging everywhere without—a sparrow should fly quickly through the house, entering by one door and departing afterwards by another. During the short space that he is within, he is indeed untouched by the storm, but that brief period of serenity is in a moment passed, and presently, returning

to the wintry storm, that he has left without, he vanishes from your sight. In like manner, this life of man appeareth but for a short time, but of what follows and of what preceded it, we are altogether ignorant. Wherefore if this new doctrine bringeth us aught that is more certain, it seemeth me that it well deserveth to be followed."

After the other speakers who followed had all given their judgment to the same effect, Paulinus was called upon by the King to expound more fully to the assembly the details of this new religion, and with such convincing force did he lay before his hearers the claims of Christianity, that at the conclusion of his address, after the King had publicly proclaimed his own conversion to the Faith of Christ, it was the high-priest Coifi himself who offered his services to profane the temples and altars which he had hitherto served.

On Easter Day, in the year 627, King Edwin and many of his family, including his niece S. Hilda, who was then thirteen years of age, together with many of his nobles, were baptized in the wooden Church of S. Peter, at York, which the King had caused to be constructed during the period of his probation as a catechumen, and on the site of which a stone Church was immediately commenced.

For the next six years a reign of peace shed its blessing over the whole kingdom of Deira; during which it is said that the laws enacted by the newly converted King were so perfect both in their tenor and in their administration, that a woman with her new-

born babe might safely walk from shore to shore without any fear of molestation. During this time of prosperity Christianity was daily increasing its hold on the inhabitants of the kingdom, who flocked in crowds to the river-banks to be baptized by S. Paulinus —"a man tall in stature, a little stooping, his hair black, his face emaciated, his nose slender and aquiline, his aspect both venerable and majestic."

But this happy period was of all too short duration, for, in the year 633, seventeen years after Edwin's accession to the throne, war was declared against him by Cadwallon, the British King, assisted by Penda, the pagan King of Mercia, who seemed always ready to champion the cause of those who opposed the Cross. The two armies met, on 12 October, on a plain near Hatfield, in Yorkshire, and in the battle that ensued King Edwin was slain and his whole army put to rout.

Influenced perhaps by some presentiment as to his coming fate, King Edwin, on the eve of the battle, had commended his wife and children to the care of S. Paulinus, who, as soon as the news of the disaster reached him, fled with his royal charges to Kent, where he placed them under the protection of Eadbald, the Queen's brother, and where Ethelburga, who renounced the world, subsequently became Abbess of Liming.

No doubt the Bishop was right in thus obeying the dying behests of his royal patron, but why, instead of accepting the See of Rochester, he did not return to watch over the infant Church, whose foundations he had laid, will always remain a mystery. How was it

possible that these recent converts, dismayed at the destruction of the churches and their schools, aghast at the persecution that under the tyranny of Penda and Cadwallon befell all those who confessed the Name of Christ, and deserted by their teachers (for Paulinus was followed in his flight by all his clergy, with the noble exception of S. James the Deacon), should do otherwise than renounce their new-found Faith, and revert, as these poor Northumbrians did, to their heathen worship?

It was left for S. Oswald, the hereditary foe of S. Edwin, and for Aidan, the saintly monk of S. Columba's Monastery at Iona, to rekindle in Northumbria the lamp of Faith that had been thus extinguished by the disastrous defeat of Hatfield.

S. OSWALD

KING AND MARTYR *d. August 5th, 642*

For twenty-four years Ethelfrith had reigned over the united kingdom of Northumbria, which he had usurped on the death of Ælla, when in the year 617 he was slain in battle by Redwald, King of East Anglia, by whom Edwin, the son of Ælla, was replaced on the throne, while Ethelfrith's three sons, Eanfrith, Oswald and Oswy were forced to seek refuge at the Scottish Court, until, seventeen years later, King Edwin fell in battle against the superior forces of Penda, the pagan King of Mercia, and Cadwallon, who, though nominally a Christian, was the most inveterate foe of the Anglo-Saxons.

On the death of Edwin, the exiled princes returned to their native land. Osric, a convert of S. Paulinus and cousin to the late King, succeeded to the kingdom of the Deiri, while Eanfrith, the eldest son of Ethelfrith, who during his banishment had been instructed in the Christian religion, secured that of Bernicia. Both kings, however, in their prosperity, seceded from the Faith and both, within a year, fell beneath the sword of Cadwallon: Osric in battle at York, in defence of his dominions, which were suffering beneath the ravages of the British King, and Eanfrith by treachery, when he had come unadvisedly with only twelve attendants to sue for peace. On the death of his elder brother, Oswald, the second son of Ethelfrith and a nephew of Edwin, succeeded to both kingdoms.

The young King was now confronted by the arduous task of expelling a tyrannical invader, whose arrogant boast it was that none could resist him. With this object he therefore collected an army, vastly inferior in numbers to that of the foe it was destined to encounter, and surprised the enemy, whom he found carelessly encamped at a place called Hevenfeld, or Heaven's Field, near Hexham.

The night before the battle Oswald, who loyally adhered to the Faith which he had embraced in adversity, caused a rude wooden Cross to be hastily constructed, which with his own hands he held upright in the hole prepared for it, while the soil was heaped around it by the soldiers.

"Let us all bend the knee, and join in beseeching the Omnipotent, the living and true God, that He will,

of His mercy, defend us from a haughty and fierce enemy; for He knoweth that we have undertaken a just war for the safety of our nation," he then said, addressing his whole army, and the soldiers, as one man, bowed, in obedience to their sovereign's command, before the Cross. At daybreak, encouraged by a vision of S. Columba, who had been sent to assure him of present success and of a future happy reign, S. Oswald led his army, reinvigorated by this promise of success, against the enemy, and won a decisive victory over the Britons, who left their king, Cadwallon, dead upon the field.

As soon as he was thus finally established on his throne, S. Oswald's most fervent desire was to revive the Faith, which, though it had been established in Northumbria by S. Paulinus during Edwin's reign, had, notwithstanding the courageous ministrations of S. James the Deacon, become practically extinct during the recent troubles. With this object he obtained, from the Monastery of S. Columba, in Iona, the services of S. Aidan, "a man of the utmost mildness, piety and moderation, and having a zeal for God, although not fully according to knowledge," praise which, if it seems at first sight rather qualified, loses this aspect when we remember that S. Aidan, as a monk of Iona, adhered to the Celtic use concerning the date of Easter, a use which all those English clergy, who, like the writer, S. Bede, owed their Christianity to the mission of S. Augustine, regarded with abhorrence.

S. Aidan, by his own choice, fixed his episcopal

see at Lindisfarne, and for the next eight years we have the beautiful spectacle of a saintly Bishop and his monks ministering with unwearying devotion to willing hearers, who thronged to receive their instructions in the Faith and to bring their children to Holy Baptism, while the King himself, in such time as he could spare from the duties of a well-administered State, interpreted to his subjects the teaching of S. Aidan, who was but imperfectly acquainted with the Anglo-Saxon tongue.

Shortly after his accession King Oswald married Kyneburga, daughter of Cynegils, King of Wessex, and it was during his visit to that court that the latter was converted to Christianity, partly by the persuasion of S. Birinus, partly, as we may believe, by the holy example of his guest, who was thus enabled to stand sponsor at the Font to his future father-in-law.

Utterly indifferent to his own royal state, S. Oswald, who chiefly resided at Bamborough, and who was always a kind and bountiful friend to the poor, spent much of his revenues on the erection and restoration of churches, schools and oratories, which, even in those places where they had been originally founded by S. Paulinus, had in most cases suffered demolition at the hands of Cadwallon.

It is related that during S. Oswald's reign his dominions were visited by a terrible pestilence, and that the King, in his distress, entreated that God would accept him as a victim in the room of his subjects. Shortly afterwards the King fell grievously sick of the plague, but while he lay awaiting death, in the firm

confidence that God had accepted his offering, he beheld at his bedside three mysterious figures, one of whom, acting as spokesman for the rest, said to him in authoritative tones: "Thy prayers and meekness, O King, are accepted with God. Thou belongest to us, for as a reward of thy faith, charity and piety, thou shalt shortly be crowned with an immortal crown. But not at present; God giveth thee now both thine own life and that of thy subjects; thou art ready to die a martyr for them; but thou shalt die far more happily as a martyr for God."

The King recovered in due course, and the pestilence was removed from the land, but before long the prediction of the strange visitants was fulfilled and S. Oswald fell a victim at Maserfeld (Oswestry) to the sword of that same Penda, King of Mercia, who had slain King Edwin. He died on 5 August, 642, in the thirty-eighth year of his age, with the prayer upon his lips that God would have mercy on the souls of his soldiers.

King Oswald's head and arms were severed by order of King Penda and impaled on posts placed on the field of battle, till a year later they were buried at Lindisfarne in the tomb of S. Cuthbert; the rest of his remains were removed by Queen Osthryda, daughter of his brother Oswy, to the monastery of Bardney in Lincolnshire. Greatly esteemed as the late King was, however, for his sanctity, the monks of Bardney, who regarded him as a usurper for the lordship he had acquired over a portion of Mercia, at first positively refused to grant admittance to his relics, and a tent was

consequently erected outside the monastery, over the waggon which contained them.

" In heaven a crown
Rests on Saint Oswald's head : yet here on earth
King Oswald's foot profaned our Mercian bound :
Therefore in Mercian earth he finds not grave."[1]

That night the wind howled and the rain dashed against the monastery, but next morning, to the amazement of the monks, shepherds came thronging to the gates of the monastery, apparently oblivious of the night's hurricane, to inquire the meaning of the pillar of light, which, extending from earth to Heaven, unperceived by the monks, had all that night kept vigil beside the glittering tent outside their gates. But still the monks, hardening their hearts, refused credence to the herdsmen's tale, till the selfsame story was told them by a Pilgrim, who had that morning landed on their shores on his return from the Holy Land. Conscious of their defeat, yet loath to acknowledge it, the monks sat in sullen silence, till finally one of their number, aged, white-headed and almost blind, rose to his feet, and in a voice of low-toned reproof warned his brethren of the risk they ran in striving thus against God.

" Yourselves doomed men that stand between two fates,
On one side right, on one side miracles !
Brethren, the chief of miracles is this
That knowing what you know, ye know no more :
Ye know long since that Oswald is a Saint,
Ye know the sins of Saints are sins forgiven.
What then ? Shall man revenge where God forgives ? "

[1] The lines here quoted are taken from the " Vengeance of the Monks of Bardney," published by Mr. A. de Vere in his *Legends of the Saxon Saints.*

And that evening, as the western sun lit up the grey stone arches of the Church of Bardney, its monks, convinced at last as to their duty and privilege, bore to their resting-place the remains of the Northumbrian Saint, which, however, during the Danish incursions, were removed for greater safety to Gloucester.

S. OSWIN

KING AND MARTYR *d. August 20th, 651*

In the second year of the reign of King Oswy, who had succeeded his brother Oswald on the throne of Northumbria, alarmed perhaps at the strong claim of the descendants of S. Edwin, this prince resigned the Kingdom of Deira to Oswin, the son of Osric, who had inherited that same portion of the Northumbrian dominions from his father Edwin.

" Comely to behold, tall in stature, agreeable in discourse, courteous in manners and bountiful to all," it was only natural that Oswin, " both for his royal dignity of mind and countenance as also for his merits," should be esteemed by rich and poor alike, and that the saintly Aidan, who since the days of S. Oswald had presided over the see of Lindisfarne, should love him as his own soul, though it may well be that he would feign have inspired the King with more of that fighting spirit, of which the Bishop possessed a larger measure than his more yielding patron.

A characteristic story of an incident that occurred towards the close of Oswin's all too brief reign, affords

a touching illustration of the relations that existed between the two Saints.

The King, judging the long journeys which the Bishop invariably made on foot to be both dangerous and beyond his strength, presented the latter with a very valuable horse. Not long afterwards S. Aidan, meeting a beggar man, who entreated of him an alms, without further thought, bestowed upon him both the horse and his trappings—an act of charity which speedily reached the ears of the original donor. That same day, while the King and the Bishop, who was then his guest, were waiting till dinner should be served, the royal host inquired with some annoyance: "How was it, my Lord Bishop, that you bestowed the kingly horse which we gave you for your own use on this poor man? Have we not many horses of less value which would have sufficed for the needs of a beggar, without giving him that which we had selected for your private possession?"

"What is this that you say, O King?" exclaimed the Bishop, almost in dismay. "Is it possible that that foal of a mare is dearer to you than a son of God?"

The King, who was warming himself before the fire that burnt upon the hearth, pondered silently over this reply, at first apparently with some irritation; but after a few moments, struck with remorse, he ungirded his sword, and handing it to his servant, cast himself humbly on his knees before S. Aidan, promising never again to grudge to the poor whatever portion of his treasure the Bishop might see fit to bestow upon them.

The Bishop, deeply moved, assured the King of his entire reconciliation, but whereas, during the meal, S. Oswin's spirits rose to their usual level, those of his guest declined so manifestly that his servants, noticing his depression, inquired of him the cause.

"I weep," he replied in the Scottish tongue, which the King and his courtiers did not understand, "because never before did I behold a prince so humble. Wherefore I perceive that he is soon to be snatched out of this life, seeing that this nation is unworthy of such a ruler."

Only too soon afterwards the saintly Bishop's gloomy forebodings met with their fulfilment. For six years Oswy and Oswin had lived in apparent harmony, but it would appear that during this period Oswy had secretly repented of the division of the kingdom, which he had himself suggested, and at this very time, unable any longer to restrain his resentment, was preparing to enter upon open hostilities.

With what forces he could muster, Oswin encountered Oswy's army on Vilfar's Hill, twelve miles from Catterick, but perceiving at once the hopeless inferiority of his forces, and refusing to expose them to useless butchery, he assembled his army, and after thanking his soldiers for their loyalty and devotion, bade them return every man to his own home. Sorrowfully and reluctantly the men of Deira went their way, leaving their King, accompanied only by one faithful follower, Tundhere by name, to turn aside in search of shelter to the house of a certain Earl Hundwald, on whose friendship he believed he could rely.

But Oswy, though now in possession of Deira, felt that he should know no peace so long as its late ruler, who had so deservedly won for himself the love of his subjects, was still alive, and he therefore dispatched Count Ethelwin, with a sufficient force, in pursuit of the fugitive King. The search was not a long one. Hundwald, oblivious of the many signal favours that he had received at the hands of his royal patron, betrayed his guest. With the connivance of its owner his castle at Gilling, near Richmond, was surrounded by night, and on 20 August, 651, Oswin was delivered into the hands of his enemies.

"The sentence of your King depends upon the permission of my King," was Oswin's bold reply to the announcement delivered with feigned horror by the perfidious Hundwald of his impending fate, and, together with his faithful Tundhere, who insisted upon sharing his master's lot, he joyfully accepted at the hands of Bernician soldiers the martyrdom which S. Aidan, who survived his beloved sovereign only eleven days, had predicted for him.

The martyred King was buried at Gilling, where Eanfleda, wife of Oswy and daughter of King Edwin, in atonement for this one blot on her husband's career, with the consent of the former, who seems to have repented of his misdeed, erected a Monastery, subsequently destroyed by the Danes, where prayers should be perpetually offered on behalf of both princes. Later, however, for greater safety, his remains were translated to Tynemouth, where they were deposited in a secret part of an Oratory dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, that was built into the rock.

Years passed, and during the persecutions that harassed the Church during the Danish invasions, S. Oswin was practically forgotten. One night, however, there appeared to a holy monk of Tynemouth, Edmund by name, a man of tall and muscular frame, around whom shone a mystic halo of light.

"I am King Oswin," explained the mysterious stranger, "slain by Oswy through the detestable treachery of Earl Hundwald, and I lie in this Church, unknown to all! Rise therefore and go to Bishop Egelwin. Bid him seek my body beneath the pavement of this Oratory, and let him reinter it more becomingly in this same Chapel."

In consequence of this vision a search was at once instituted, and the remains of S. Oswin were duly translated to a more honourable resting-place on the anniversary of his death, 20 August, in the year 1103.

S. EDMUND

KING AND MARTYR *d. November 20th, 870*

Bitter were the wailings and loud the threats of vengeance that echoed through the halls of Ragnar Lodbrog, prince of Denmark, for the skiff in which its lord had gone forth hawking one sunny morning had drifted after many days to shore, bearing, in place of its royal occupant, a stranger. Filled with gloomy suspicions, the two sons of Lodbrog, Hinguar and Hubba, diligently plied the castaway with searching questions, only to learn from the latter, the huntsman of Edmund, King of East Anglia, that their father

had been cast ashore upon the coast of Norfolk and had there been foully murdered by his royal host.

But the huntsman lied. Overtaken by a terrible storm, Lodbrog had been tossed for many days upon the restless waves, which had finally carried him to Redham, on the Norfolk coast—so far the tale was true—but the sequel was false. After landing on English soil the noble Dane had received a kindly welcome from Edmund, the successor of King Offa on the East Anglian throne, where his virtue, his humility and his sincere devotion to the welfare of his subjects had deservedly won for him their love and esteem. Lodbrog's respect for the young King's gentle bearing and for the civilization, so vastly superior to that which he had left in his own country, that prevailed at the East Anglian Court, on the one hand, and Edmund's admiration for the strength and prowess of his guest, on the other, speedily laid, between the two, the foundations of mutual respect and of sincere friendship. But the royal huntsman was jealous of the marvellous dexterity displayed by his master's guest during the chase, and one day, when the two friends had gone hunting together, seizing a moment when the King and his guest had become separated in their pursuit of the quarry, he treacherously slew the Danish prince and cast his body into a neighbouring ditch.

This dastardly deed, however, did not long remain concealed, for Lodbrog, while at Edmund's Court, had trained as his inseparable companion a greyhound, which by his hurried visits to the Court for food and

by his persistent return to the wood to watch over his master's remains, soon attracted the attention of the courtiers; whereupon the huntsman, seeing his crime discovered, openly confessed his guilt, in punishment of which he was condemned to be cast adrift in the very boat which had borne the illustrious stranger to their shores. The cowardly methods by which the murderer shifted the burden of his crime from his own shoulders to those of his innocent master have already been described, and as soon as the necessary preparations were at length complete, a powerful Danish fleet set sail for the Northumbrian coast, where the numerous forces that it conveyed speedily laid waste the whole district from the Tweed to the Humber, and then, penetrating into the Kingdom of East Anglia, destroyed Thetford and proceeded to devastate the entire neighbourhood with fire and sword. King Edmund at once rallied what forces he could in the hope of offering resistance, but the numbers that he could muster were so pitifully small in comparison with those of the invaders, that after one severe defeat at Hoxne, rather than expose his soldiers to certain death, he disbanded his army and himself retired in the direction of his castle of Framlingham.

One night, however, as he journeyed, his hiding-place was betrayed to some of the Danish soldiers, who conducted the Saxon King, laden with chains, into the presence of their commander, where terms were offered to him which religion and honour alike forbade him to accept.

Convinced, after long threats and persuasions, that

S. Edmund would never consent to save his life by abjuring his Faith, the Danish barbarians bound him naked to a tree, there to serve as a target for their marksmen, till, at last, wearying of this ghastly sport, and perhaps even moved to pity by his fortitude, orders were given that he should be beheaded, and his body cast into a thicket close at hand.

The legend goes on to tell that when the Christians came to bury their martyred King, they were guided to the spot by a pillar of light, whilst over the severed head, which lay at some little distance apart, watched a huge grey wolf, which attached itself to the mourners and accompanied them reverently to the grave, where a small chapel was afterwards erected.

Thirty years later the relics of S. Edmund were removed from Hoxne to Beodricsworth, where in later days, round the great stone Church and Monastery with which, strangely enough, King Canute, himself a Dane, replaced the earlier wooden buildings, rose the present town of Bury St. Edmunds.

In the year 1095 larger and more magnificent buildings, better adapted to the magnitude and dignity of the community that occupied them, were substituted for the conventual buildings of King Canute, and it is to the glories of this latter foundation, which for nearly five centuries maintained the reputation that " never the sun shone upon a goodlier Abbey," that the few fragments of architecture which survived the suppression of the Monastery in 1539 still bear silent witness.

S. EDWARD

KING AND MARTYR *d. March 18th, 979*

It was at eventide on 18 March of the year 979, that the young King Edward approached the door of "Corfe geate," a name which popular tradition has associated with the hunting-lodge, belonging to the Convent of Shaftesbury, which then occupied the site of the present ruins of Corfe Castle, which was built there in Norman times, and where Elfreda, the second wife of his dead father, was at that time residing with his young stepbrother, Ethelred.

The son of Edgar "the Peaceful," by his first wife, Edward, who was then only thirteen years of age, had succeeded his father as overlord of Northumbria, Mercia and Wessex, and in the three years that had elapsed, during which he had in all things followed the counsels of S. Dunstan, he had won the devoted love of his subjects by his admirable qualities. But notwithstanding the earnest endeavours that the young King, with a tact that was altogether out of proportion to his years, had made to conciliate his stepmother, Elfreda, the latter, owing to the bitter resentment with which she regarded his occupation of a throne which she eagerly coveted on behalf of her own son, Ethelred, a child of seven, had constantly remained his most implacable enemy.

On this 18th day of March the young King, weary with a long day's hunting during which he had become separated from his attendants, drew rein before the door of Elfreda's dwelling and asked to see his young brother,

to whom he was passionately attached. According to the legend most commonly accepted, the King appears to have refused to dismount from his horse, and was on the point of raising the stirrup-cup to his lips when, at a signal from the treacherous Queen, who thus seized a long-sought opportunity, a retainer, unsheathing his dagger, stabbed the unsuspecting guest in the back.

Realizing at once the seriousness of the wound, Edward set spurs to his horse, and sought to rejoin his companions, but slipping ere long from the saddle, he was dragged by the terrified horse, through a neighbouring wood, along a track that was marked by his blood.

It is related that when the body was recovered, the Queen, still unrepentant of her foul deed, ordered it to be carried to the cottage of a poor woman, blind from her birth, where it was hastily covered over with mean cloths. That night, however, as the widow woman watched beside the corpse, a marvellous light illumined the squalid room, which penetrated even the blind eyes of the poor woman and restored to them their sight—and which penetrated also beneath the ragged coverings, and revealed that he who lay beneath them was none other than he who had but yesterday worn the crown of England.

The Queen, who in the morning received prompt tidings of this miracle, next gave instructions that the body should be interred deep in marshy ground, but here again it was miraculously revealed by a shaft of light to the attendants of the late King,

who carried his remains to Wareham, and there buried them, but without any attempt at dignity or state.

Three years later, attended by the Earl of Mercia, the Bishop of Sherborne, his sister, S. Edith of Wilton, and many other dignitaries, a long procession of monks and nuns solemnly bore the earthly remains of the martyred King up the steep road that leads to Shaftesbury Abbey, and here so marvellous were the miracles wrought by the relics of the royal Saint, that even Elfreda, touched with remorse, conceived a desire to visit them. With this object she one day mounted her horse, but finding that neither spurs nor whip could avail to induce either this horse or any other to carry her to the tomb of her murdered victim, she was at length obliged to desist from the attempt till, repenting her more perfectly of her evil deed, she finally renounced her royal state and founded, in expiation of her crime, the monasteries of Wherwell and Ambresbury, in the former of which she passed the remaining years of her life in penance and seclusion.

S. EDWARD

KING AND CONFESSOR *d. January 5th, 1066*

Alone, in his solitary cell, knelt Brithwald, erstwhile Bishop of Wilton, but now, for a season, Monk of Glastonbury, entreating that God would deliver his unhappy country from the Danish scourge, which, in the days of Ethelred the Unready, swept across it, desolating in its course all of religion, civilization and personal security with which it came in contact.

Exhausted at length by the very fervour of his prayer, Brithwald sank into a deep sleep, and as he slept, beheld a glorious multitude of heavenly spirits, amidst whom stood S. Peter, and before him a youthful prince of most fair countenance, to whom the Apostle, after anointing him King, gave many prudent counsels, and finally enjoined upon him a vow of perpetual chastity.

With deep humility the Bishop thereupon addressed himself to S. Peter, and inquired of him eagerly concerning the future fate of this kingdom of England.

"The kingdom is the Lord's," replied S. Peter, "Who is the Ruler of all kingdoms, and it is He that reigneth over the children of men. He giveth and He taketh away both crowns and empires, as it seemeth Him good; He setteth up at times wicked monarchs, in order thus to punish the sins of this English nation, who, by their manifold transgressions, have grievously offended His Divine Majesty, and who, in punishment of their crimes, are now delivered over to the fury of a barbarous people. But God will not forget to show pity, neither in His wrath will He turn away His mercy from you for ever. It shall come to pass when thou, in thine old age, shalt be gathered to thy fathers, that He shall visit His people and shall deliver them from this abyss of misery; and to this end He hath chosen Him a prince after His own heart, who shall fulfil all His will. The beloved of his subjects, the terror of his enemies, and a firm support of God's Church, he shall, after a happy reign of justice, conclude a saintly life with a holy death."

The vision faded, the good Bishop, consoled by the comforting words of the Apostle, in due course died, but for a time the promised relief seemed more remote than ever.

Ethelred the Unready had died of disease within three years of his return from an enforced flight to the Norman Court to a kingdom which was once more rapidly slipping from his grasp; his widow, the Norman Princess Emma, a woman who cared for naught so long as she might share a throne, was married to the Danish foe of her late husband, who now wore his crown; Edward and Alfred, her two sons by her first marriage, dwelt in exile at the Court of their uncle, Richard Duke of Normandy; Edmund Ironsides, an elder but illegitimate son of the late King Ethelred, after struggling valiantly for two years to free a country that was too exhausted by the ravages of the Danes and by internal dissensions to fight with any real energy for its own independence, died suddenly—and as it was generally believed by foul means; and Canute the Dane remained thus sole ruler of the Anglo-Danish nation, over which he reigned in peace till the year 1035.

On the death of Canute a violent controversy arose as to who should succeed him, which ended in a compromise, effected by the Witenamegot, that Harold, Canute's illegitimate son, should rule north of the Thames, while Harthacnut, the son whom Queen Emma had borne him, should rule the southern districts.

It was not long after the news of Canute's death had

reached the Norman Court, that Edward, the elder son of Ethelred, with but few ships and a scanty following, set sail for England, trusting apparently, for some inexplicable reason, in the support of his mother, who, however, as he had already good cause to know, retained not the slightest affection for the children of her former marriage. The Queen, in any case, lost no time in proving to him the fallacy of his confidence; she cast all her influence on the side of her youngest son, Harold, and Edward was speedily forced, with considerable difficulty, to effect his escape to Normandy.

Not long after Edward's return from this futile expedition, a letter appears to have reached the Norman Court, which, purporting to come from their royal mother, invited one at least of the two young princes to come to England and to press his claim to the throne. The story that the letter was actually sent by Queen Emma is generally discredited; some historians attribute it to Earl Godwin, whilst others, and apparently with better reason, believe it to have been a forgery on the part of King Harold; but however that may be, Alfred, the younger brother, accepted the invitation and was welcomed on his arrival with apparent good-will by the great Earl Godwin, who had promised to conduct him safely to his mother. But whether by a deed of treachery that was originally intended, or from suspicions aroused by the extent of the Norman retinue, by which the young prince was attended, the fact remains that, whilst under Godwin's care, Alfred's escort, which numbered

some seven hundred men, was almost entirely exterminated, whilst the prince himself was so cruelly tortured that he died after a few days of suffering.

At length, however, in the year 1042, after a brief reign of two years, Harthacnut followed his brother, Harold Harefoot, whom he had succeeded, to the grave, and the people of England, weary of the foreign yoke, which had pressed them sorely under the reign of Canute's unworthy sons, and influenced largely by Earl Godwin, who had hitherto trimmed his sails with such dexterity as to prosper whoever else went to ruin, but who henceforward stood for the maintenance of Saxon independence, invited Edward, the son of Ethelred and the stepbrother of Harthacnut, to ascend a throne to which he was unfortunately less well adapted than to the cloister.

By birth, of course, King Edward was an Englishman, but the seven years that he had spent at his uncle's Court had unhappily alienated his sympathies from his own countrymen, and he returned from exile a man deeply imbued with Norman interests and Norman habits, and who even spoke the Norman tongue in preference to that of his native country.

One cannot help wondering what good Bishop Brithwald would have thought could he have witnessed the swarm of Norman favourites who speedily occupied all the high offices at the English Court and the throng of Norman ecclesiastics who were pressed into every vacant see and benefice, and who thus threatened the very existence of the national Church. Unless with prophetic instinct he could have looked forward into

the future, and beheld the vast benefits that would ultimately result from the fusion of the Norman and Anglo-Saxon nations, would he not possibly have considered that this prince, from whom he had anticipated a complete restitution of the old Saxon order that he had loved and served, was somewhat of a failure and was but paving the way for a more powerful and more enduring tyranny than that of the Danes.

In the early part of his reign Edward was married to Eadgyth, the beautiful and virtuous daughter of the powerful Earl Godwin, with whom, however, owing to a vow of chastity made during the years of his exile in Normandy, he lived not as a husband, but as a brother, and whom he actually at one time, whilst her father, owing to his avowed detestation of the King's Norman proclivities, was in exile, relegated, together with her maidens, to the Convent of Wherwell. One must, I think, confess, that such a vow was singularly ill-advised in one who might possibly, if not probably, ascend the throne of England, and who should have considered that in that eventuality the future security of his subjects, which he was bound to consider before his personal inclinations, would be seriously endangered by the absence of a direct heir to the crown.

It was during Godwin's period of banishment, which he spent at the Court of Baldwin of Flanders, that William of Normandy first came to England, and obtained, so it was said, King Edward's promise to appoint him his successor, a promise which in any case, without the consent of the Witenagemot, was of

absolutely no authority, but which it is believed was ratified shortly afterwards under more solemn circumstances by the heir apparent, Harold, the son of Godwin, at Bayeux, or, as some say, at Avranches. Not long afterwards, however, the arrogance of the Norman favourities, whose presumption was perhaps increased by the humble deference paid by the King to their native prince, raised the tide of public opinion against themselves to such a height that Edward was forced to recall Godwin and his sons and to dismiss nearly all his Norman courtiers.

But Godwin's return to power was destined to be of no long duration. Legend relates that on the occasion of a royal banquet, the Saxon earl, resenting the blame which the King always seemed to attach to him with regard to the death of Prince Alfred, reproached him openly for his suspicions.

"Whence comes it, O King," he asked, "that at the least remembrance of your brother, you look askance at me? If I have contributed, even indirectly, to his cruel fate, may the God of Heaven cause this morsel of bread to choke me!"

The King, so it is said, vouchsafed no reply, only he made the sign of the Cross towards the mouthful of bread, which the earl was just about to eat, and thus the latter, choked by the bread, died, convicted, on his own challenge, of at least a share in the murder of the King's younger brother. He left his eldest son, Harold, to occupy the position of almost absolute authority which he himself had held under the nominal rule of Edward, who, great as were the simple goodness

and piety which had sincerely attached to him the love of his people, lacked that strength of character which he sorely needed if he were safely to guide his country through the troublous days in which his lot was cast.

Before his accession King Edward had vowed, if he should perchance be some day restored to the throne of his fathers, to undertake a pilgrimage to the shrine of S. Peter, his patron Saint, at Rome, but it was only towards the close of his reign, when his health was already considerably impaired, that he appears to have begun to contemplate the performance of his pledge. The Witenagemot, however, when the King mentioned his proposed pilgrimage, positively refused to permit any such exposure to the fatigues and difficulties of a journey which the King was manifestly unfitted to endure, and the latter therefore deemed himself obliged to appeal to the Pope, Leo IX, for a dispensation, which was granted him on condition that he should either build a new monastery, or, as he elected to do, erect a larger one on the place occupied by that originally endowed by King Sebert, concerning which the following picturesque legend is related.

It is said that in the early days of S. Augustine's mission to Canterbury, S. Mellitus had arranged himself to perform the ceremony of consecration on a church recently erected on what was then known as Thorney Island. On the previous night, however, a fisherman was accosted by a strange Priest, who bade him ferry him across to the new building, whence, after the stranger had entered, there issued, within a short space, strains of angelic music, accompanied by the

fragrance of incense and the gleam of mystic lights. When all was again silent, the stranger returned to the fisherman, who had stood watching the while in awe-struck amazement, and bade him go to S. Mellitus and inform the latter that he himself, the Apostle S. Peter, had accomplished the ceremony which the Bishop had purposed to perform on the day following, and that in token thereof he would find numerous consecration crosses graven on the walls of the new church.

It would be impossible in this short space to relate all the legends that refer to the miraculous gifts of S. Edward the Confessor; how with prophetic vision he beheld King Sweyn, while boarding his ship, preparatory to the invasion of England, slip into the water and perish in the waves, and informed his companions of the event at the very moment that it happened; or of how by his miraculous cure of divers diseases, and more especially of such persons as were afflicted with scrofula—he instituted the ceremony of "touching" for what came to be called the King's Evil. I should like, however, to relate one more beautiful tradition which, referring as it does to the King's declining years, relates also to the great Abbey of S. Peter's, on which his chief interest was then centred.

As S. Edward was one day about to enter the sacred edifice, which was still in process of building, he met, issuing thence, an aged man, who demanded of him an alms for the sake of S. John. Now it chanced that on that day the King had no money in his purse, but

drawing the gold ring from off his finger, he handed it to the stranger, in the name of the Apostle whom he especially revered. Some time later two English pilgrims, who were benighted on the way to Jerusalem, encountered there an aged and venerable man, who set them on their road and, promising them a safe return, offered for their King's sake to act himself as their guide.

"For I," he said, "am the beloved Disciple of Jesus Christ, and your King is dear to me by reason of his charity; and that he may have no doubt of what you shall relate to him of me, restore to him this ring, which he gave to me one day when I asked of him an alms, under a stranger's habit. Tell him, moreover, that the day of his death draws near. I will visit him in six months' time, and thereafter we shall be always together and shall follow the spotless Lamb whithersoever He goeth."

And thus it came formerly to be believed that in those olden days S. John the Divine, during his pilgrimage on earth, which tradition assigns to him, until our Lord shall come again in glory, once trod the aisles of the Abbey Church that S. Edward the Confessor founded at Westminster.

The strangers returned to their native land. The precious ring was restored to its owner, and shortly afterwards the King, who had long been ailing, fell grievously sick; so much so, that when, in answer to his invitation, his nobles and his clergy assembled for the Consecration of the newly completed Abbey Church of S. Peter, on Holy Innocents' Day of the

year 1065, S. Edward himself, to his disappointment, was obliged to appoint the Queen to act as his substitute on the occasion of this supreme consummation of his desires.

" I am going to live, and not to die ; I am going out of the land of the dying, to enjoy, as I hope, the good things of my Lord and Master in the land of the living " —such were the words of farewell that he addressed to Queen Eadgyth, who watched beside his bed ; and it was with such joyful hope for the future that, on the Eve of the Epiphany, 1066, fortified by the Viaticum, S. Edward the Confessor, the last hereditary Saxon King of England, passed peacefully to his rest.

CHAPTER III

EPISCOPAL SAINTS

" Where'er one Levite in the temple keeps
The watch-fire of his midnight prayer,
Or issuing thence, the eyes of mourners steeps
In heavenly balm, fresh gathered there ;
Thus saints, that seem to die in earth's rude strife,
Only win double life :
They have but left our weary ways
To live in memory here, in heaven by love and praise."

KEBLE.

S. AIDAN [1]

BISHOP *d. August 31st*, 651

THE Abbot and monks of the Monastery of S. Columba at Iona were met in solemn conclave. At the request of King Oswald, one of their number, Corman by name, had recently been sent to reconvert the people of Northumbria to the Faith, which, during the persecutions of Penda and Cadwallon, subsequent to the death of Edwin, had become almost extinct amongst them. This monk had recently returned to the Monastery, and he had even now rehearsed before his

[1] It may perhaps be objected that S. Aidan, as an Irishman, has no place among the Saints of English birth, but it has seemed more natural to me, in consideration for his intimate relations with the Northumbrian Church, to place him amongst the Saints of the nation amongst whom he laboured, in the same way as I should undoubtedly place S. Patrick, though a Scotchman, among the Saints of Ireland, or S. Ninian, though an Englishman, amongst those of Scotland.

assembled brethren the failure of his mission—a failure which he himself attributed to the intractable, harsh and barbaric dispositions of the people to whom he had been sent.

"It seems to me, brother, that you have been overharsh towards your unlearned hearers," suggested one of his companions, "and have not first afforded them, according to the apostolic precept, the milk of simpler doctrine, till, nourished by the Divine Word, they became capable of fulfilling the more perfect way of God."

And convinced by these gentle and discreet words, that the speaker, Aidan, an Irishman by birth, was himself possessed of the necessary qualifications needed for this arduous task, the latter was unanimously appointed to this difficult charge.

Consecrated Bishop in the year 633 or 634, S. Aidan, on his arrival in his future diocese, which covered an area of some two hundred miles, was cordially welcomed by King Oswald, who at once allotted to him as his episcopal see, in accordance with his own choice, not the royal city of Bamborough, but the lonely Island of Lindisfarne, which is only accessible from the mainland at low tide.

Many tales are told of the deep friendship entertained by this holy prelate both for S. Oswald and later for S. Oswin, who succeeded him in the kingdom of Deira, some of which are already recorded in the records of these royal Saints, but it may be as well to relate here a legend that is characteristic both of S. Aidan and of the former King.

On the occasion of a state banquet, which S. Aidan, who could seldom be persuaded to participate in such festivities, had consented to honour with his presence, when the Bishop had just taken up the post of honour reserved for him at S. Oswald's right hand, news was brought by the King's almoner that a hungry crowd were clamouring outside the palace gates for food. Instantly, without the smallest regard for the disappointment of his guests, King Oswald ordered that the meats upon the well-spread board be instantly removed and given to the starving multitude, and that the silver dishes, on which they lay, be speedily broken up and likewise distributed amongst them. "May this hand never perish!" exclaimed S. Aidan, deeply touched by this act of royal bounty, and tradition tells that this pious ejaculation, to which a prophetic value seems to have attached, was literally fulfilled, since Bede relates that the King's right hand, which was severed from his body on the field of Maserfeld, was still, in the historian's own day, undecayed.

And what better counsellor could these two Northumbrian princes have found than one of whom S. Bede, who uncompromisingly condemned S. Aidan for his introduction into his diocese of the observance of the Celtic date of Easter, could write, that he was zealous for peace, chastity, charity and humility; diligent both in his teaching of the Divine commands and in his obedience to the same; bold to rebuke vice; strong to assist the weak and the afflicted; and tender and charitable towards the suffering and the poor!

But friend of princes as he was, though certainly from no partiality to their high estate, S. Aidan could by no means be persuaded to abandon his rigid observance of that stern discipline which he had prescribed for his own use. It is said that during his visits to Court, where he was ever a welcome guest, he could scarcely be persuaded to partake of any but the simplest fare, and that when the King and his retinue came to Lindisfarne, they shared the life led by the Bishop and his monks, eating the same frugal meals, and sleeping, like them, upon the bare boards of the cells provided for them.

But so much has already been told of S. Aidan in the legends of his two royal friends, that it only remains to describe the manner of his death.

Broken-hearted at the death of his beloved King Oswin, S. Aidan nevertheless obeyed the summons of King Oswy, who had always held the Bishop in high esteem, to Bamborough, though no persuasions could avail to induce him to enter the palace of him whom he could not but regard as a murderer. He therefore took up his abode in a tent that was erected for him against the wall of the church, and it was here that the saintly Bishop, leaning against one of the props of his temporary dwelling, and with his eyes fixed upon the church beyond, expired suddenly on 31 August, 651, only eleven days after the death of S. Oswin.

His remains were thence conveyed by his sorrowing monks to his Monastery of Lindisfarne, over which he had ruled with such exemplary piety and humility for some sixteen years.

Among the various miracles attributed to this Apostle of Northumbria, the two following are perhaps the most attractive.

A certain priest, named Witta, was on one occasion commissioned by King Oswy to fetch from Kent his bride, the Princess Eanfleda, the daughter of King Edwin. Dreading the perils of this sea voyage, the said priest appealed to S. Aidan for his parting benediction, which the latter willingly bestowed upon him, giving him, in addition to his blessing, some hallowed oil, the outpouring of which would, he promised him, instantly allay the tempest that would assuredly overtake him. On the return journey the predicted hurricane arose, and already the towering waves were beginning to sweep the decks and were threatening to engulf the vessel, when Witta, in this hour of despair, bethought him of the phial that Aidan had given him on parting, the effect of which was instantaneous. No sooner did the oil come in contact with the troubled waters than the waves ceased their turmoil, the sky grew clear, and a fair breeze carried the ship safely to the Northumbrian shore.

On another occasion, when Penda, King of Mercia, was devastating the northern kingdoms, his soldiers, after destroying the neighbouring villages and collecting thence all the combustible material that they could find, deposited the piles of fuel thus procured against the walls of the city of Bamborough, and proceeded to set fire to them. S. Aidan, who was at that time at Lindisfarne, perceived the conflagration that arose from the burning city, and instantly, falling on his

knees, entreated God to restrain the evil that was being thus wrought by the pagan King. And immediately, in answer to the intercessions of the Saint, the wind changed, and driving back the flames upon the soldiers who had kindled them, forced them to abandon their positions and to relinquish their attack upon the town.

S. CEDD

BISHOP *d. October 26th, soon after 664*

In the year 653 Peada, the son of Penda, King of Mercia, visited the Court of Oswy, King of Bernicia, to ask in marriage the hand of Alchfleda, the King's daughter by his former marriage. But Oswy, notwithstanding his murder of King Oswin, was a Christian, and as such positively rejected the suit of the Mercian prince unless, indeed, the latter and his subjects were prepared to confess the Christian Faith. Peada, however, was easily persuaded, partly by King Oswy himself, partly by his friendship with the King's son, Alchfrith, to hear the Gospel preached and to consider the possibility of himself becoming a convert, and to such purpose did he listen to it and so thoroughly did he become persuaded of its truth, that it was not long before he declared that even if Oswy should still refuse him his bride, he would none the less surely accept it as his own.

When Peada had been baptized by Finan, Bishop of Lindisfarne, and had subsequently married the Princess Alchfleda, he returned to his own country,

taking with him a little band of four missionaries, and amongst them S. Cedd, the brother of S. Chad, who should instruct his people in the Faith he had himself professed, and though Penda, his father, had so long waged war against the advance of Christianity, even he seems to have been ready to encourage their mission, declaring that he condemned only "those wretches who refused to obey the God in Whom they believed."

When, however, shortly afterwards, Sigbert, King of Essex, surnamed the Good, during a visit to King Oswy, was likewise converted to Christianity, he also, prior to his return, requested missionaries who should instruct his subjects, whereupon S. Cedd and another priest were bidden to leave Mercia and to attempt the conversion of the East Saxons, who had remained heathen since the expulsion of S. Mellitus. These two missionaries met with such a warm welcome in this new field of their labours, that not long afterwards S. Cedd was able to return to Lindisfarne, whence he had originally come, to report the success of their mission and to apply for further instructions, and before returning south was himself consecrated by S. Finan as Bishop of the East Saxons, though he is more usually styled, after the chief city of his diocese, Bishop of London.

On his return to Essex, S. Cedd established himself and his monks in two principal monasteries, the one at Ythancester, which was identical with the Roman station of Othona, and which has since been swallowed up by the sea, and the other at Tilbury.

But the labours of S. Cedd were not confined to

Essex, since through the instrumentality of his brother, Celin, who was Chaplain to King Edilwald, who had succeeded his father Oswin on the throne of Deira, he became acquainted with his brother's patron, who, finding that he was "an holy, wise and good man," offered him his choice of a tract of land on which to build a monastery. Gladly accepting this offer S. Cedd selected a spot among the mountain-crags, a desolate locality which seemed more fitted for a haunt of evil spirits or wild beasts than for the habitation of man, and prepared to purify the place by a most rigid observance, on the site of the future monastery, of the Forty Days of Lent; and when, ten days before the conclusion of the Fast, Edilwald sent to command his presence on important business, he deputed a brother, Cynibill, to complete the purification in his stead.

From this time forward S. Cedd divided his time between his new Monastery of Lastingham, of which he was appointed Abbot, and his diocese of Essex.

It was not long after S. Cedd's first return to his diocese that Sigbert, King of Essex, met with an untimely death. It happened after this manner. Because one of the King's relations had recently contracted a marriage within the prohibited degrees, S. Cedd had pronounced against him a bann of excommunication, and had also forbidden all who would heed him to enter the house of this noble or to eat bread with him. The King, however, slighted this command and accepted an invitation to a banquet at the Earl's house, but on his return from the banquet,

chancing to meet the Bishop, and fully realizing the evil that he had committed, he dismounted and fell trembling at the latter's feet. S. Cedd also dismounted, and striking the King lightly with the episcopal wand that he carried, prophesied, in tones of stern denunciation, "I tell you that because you could not keep yourself from the abode of that lost and contemned person, you yourself shall perish in that very house."

And so it happened; for not long afterwards this same Earl and his brother, having successfully enticed the King once more into that same dwelling, murdered him there treacherously, for no better reason than because he was too lenient towards his enemies.

Of the latter days of S. Cedd's life we know but little, save that he was present at the Synod of Whitby in 664, and was there converted to what, in common with the Church of Rome, thereafter became the general use of the English Church, and that not long after this he returned to Lastingham, where he died of a pestilence, which had already wrought terrible havoc amongst his community.

S. Bede relates that, on hearing of his death, a party of thirty monks from Essex abandoned their native country in their desire to end their days on the spot where their beloved Father in God had breathed his last, and that there, overtaken with the same pestilence, they all perished, with the exception of one little boy, who, as it was afterwards discovered, had not previously received Holy Baptism.

S. CHAD

BISHOP *d. March 2nd, 673*

Upon the death of Tuda, Bishop of Lindisfarne, whilst Wilfrid, who had been appointed by Alchfrith, the son of Oswy and under-king of Deira, to succeed him, tarried long in France, whither he had gone to receive consecration at the hands of Agilbert, Bishop of Paris, King Oswy, wearying perhaps at Wilfrid's long delay, sent to Kent a "holy man, one who was modest in manners and amply instructed in the reading of the Scriptures, and who diligently practised those things which he learnt from the Scriptures should be done," there to be consecrated Bishop. This holy man, of whom the Venerable Bede has left us such admirable testimony, was S. Chad, whom his brother, S. Cedd, had before his death entrusted with the charge of the Monastery of Lastingham in Yorkshire, which he had himself founded.

On his arrival in Kent, finding that Deusdedit, Archbishop of Canterbury, to whom he had been sent, was dead, and that no successor to him had yet been appointed, S. Chad sought consecration at the hands of Wini, Bishop of Wessex, and of two assistant prelates (666), and thereafter returning to the north, devoted himself assiduously to the labours of his diocese, which he visited, after the apostolic example, on foot, and where he preached the Gospel not only in the towns and villages, but also in the meanest cottages and in the open fields.

When, however, Theodore reached England, and proceeded, as Archbishop of Canterbury, to visit every part of his metropolitan charge, finding fault with certain irregularities in the manner of S. Chad's consecration, he called upon this saintly Bishop to resign in favour of Wilfrid, who had originally been destined for the See of York.

"If you judge that I have not rightly received the Episcopal Ordination," was the meek reply, "I willingly resign that function, of which I have never deemed myself to be worthy; but which, though unworthy, I submitted in obedience to undertake."

And so delighted was Archbishop Theodore with the humility of this answer, that he straightway rectified any irregularities in the Consecration of the Saint, and though he suffered him to withdraw for a brief space to Lastingham, no sooner was the See of Mercia left vacant by the death of Bishop Jaruman, than he appointed S. Chad as his successor. Only, since, as has been already mentioned, S. Chad was wont to accomplish all his journeys on foot, S. Theodore now stipulated, that, in consideration for his age, he should thenceforward perform all longer distances on horseback.

S. Chad, who thus became Bishop of Mercia and Lindsey, at once selected as his episcopal See the city of Lichfield, a place sanctified by the death of numerous martyrs under the persecutions of Maximian, whence he governed his diocese "most gloriously and with admirable perfection of life," retiring, whenever he could snatch any time from his episcopal duties,

to the seclusion of an oratory close beside the church, where he loved to pass his time in prayer and reading, together with some six or seven of his chosen brethren.

It is related of S. Chad that he always regarded any storm or tempest as a special admonition from God to be ever ready for his latter end. "For in all these things," he was wont to say, "we hear the voice of God calling upon us to prepare for judgment and for His coming at the Last Day." With this object, therefore, whenever the wind howled and the thunder crashed overhead, and when the lightning illuminated the sky with its lurid flashes, the Saint was accustomed to withdraw to the church, and there to kneel in prayer for himself and for others till the storm had passed away.

Amongst the number of the favoured disciples of S. Chad was one Oswini, who having been formerly the steward of Queen Etheldreda (S. Awdry) in the kingdom of East Anglia, had one day presented himself at the gates of Lastingham, clad in mean garments and bearing in his hand a hatchet and an axe, to signify that it was not idleness he sought, but work.

One February day, some two and a half years after S. Chad had first come to Lichfield, whilst his companions were in the church, this good monk Oswini, who was busying himself over the affairs of the house, heard to his amazement a most sweet voice of singing and of melody descend from Heaven, "which voice, to wit," he declared, "he heard first in the south-east, that is from that part of the

sky where the sun rises during the winter solstice," till gradually approaching nearer and nearer, it completely enveloped the oratory in which the Bishop knelt.

And when Oswini had already meditated in silence, for the space of half an hour, what this celestial harmony should mean, he heard once more this same joyous strain issue through the roof of the oratory and reascend, with inexpressible sweetness, to the Heaven whence it had come.

At length when all was again silent, and while he yet pondered over this mysterious circumstance, Oswini beheld the aged Bishop come to the window and call to whoever chanced to be close at hand, and when the monk, in answer to his voice, hastened to obey his summons, he bade him fetch the brethren who were within the church and bring them speedily hither. And so soon as they were all assembled the venerable Bishop admonished these favoured disciples diligently to cherish the virtues of mutual love and peace, and to observe the rule of discipline that they had learnt from him by rule and example; "For," he said, "that most amiable guest, who was wont to visit our brethren, hath this day deigned to visit me and to summon me from this world, wherefore, returning to the church, I bid that you instruct the other monks that they commend my departure to the Lord with their prayers, and that they prepare also for their own departure, the hour of which is uncertain, by vigils, prayer and good works."

But when Oswini found himself once more alone

with his beloved Bishop, prostrating himself on the earth before him, he inquired humbly of him the cause of the heavenly anthem that had previously met his ears.

"If you have heard that voice of song," replied the aged Saint, "and have perceived also the descent of the angelic companies, I charge you in God's Name that you speak not thereof until after my decease. For these were in truth angelic spirits, who were come to call me to the heavenly rewards which I have ever loved and desired, and who have promised to return after seven days and to take me with them." And being presently attacked by the terrible pestilence that was at that time raging throughout his whole diocese, S. Chad, seven days later, peacefully departed this life. S. Bede further relates that on this same 2nd of March, in the year 673, the date of S. Chad's death, a certain holy priest of Ireland, Egbert by name, or it may be some one of his acquaintance, beheld the soul of S. Cedd and an attendant host of angelic spirits issue amid strains of celestial music through the open gates of Heaven, and shortly return thither, joyfully bearing in their midst the soul of his brother S. Chad to his appointed place amid the mansions of the blest.

S. CUTHBERT

BISHOP AND HERMIT — *d. March 20th*, 687

A cloud of mystery overshadows the antecedents of this famous north-country Saint, whom some maintain to have been of noble birth, and others,

with it must be confessed greater probability, of humble origin. Only this much is certainly known to us—that as a child he tended sheep near Lammermoor, and there, as it appears, excelled all his little playfellows in their childish sports.

Legend relates that whilst S. Cuthbert was still only eight years old, he was one day accosted by a tiny child of three, who exhorted him in grave terms to renounce his childish pastimes and to devote himself to such learning as would fit him to the high office which he was destined to occupy in God's Church. Cuthbert, it would seem, was at first disposed to thrust lightly aside the admonitions of the little fellow, whereupon the latter, falling to the ground, cried out as if in physical pain, which the shepherd lad at once did his utmost to relieve.

"Nay, Cuthbert, it is for thee I weep," exclaimed the child sadly, in answer to Cuthbert's gentle ministrations, "because thou preferrest these vain amusements, which are manifestly inconsistent with thy nature and degree, to the teaching of God's servants."

With these words the child suddenly vanished from sight, and it was while pondering over these strange sayings, which, boy as he was, he realized to be divinely inspired, that the future Saint received his first impulse towards the religious life to which he afterwards dedicated himself.

It was not long after this incident that an accident to his knee set a definite limit to the games in which Cuthbert so delighted, and which he had evidently

not yet entirely abandoned. For weeks he lay upon a weary bed of pain, or sometimes, if the day were fine, his friends would lay him on a couch beside the cottage door, to breathe the purer air, and perhaps to watch the sports in which he could henceforth take no share. One day, as he was lying thus in the sunshine, there chanced to ride in that direction a stranger of distinguished appearance, clad entirely in white, who, when he noticed the cripple lad, dismounted from his horse and inquired of him what ailed him. The boy replied that he had injured his knee, and that the physicians held out but scanty hopes that he would ever regain the use of it; whereupon his visitor, after examining the injured part, bade Cuthbert procure a poultice of milk and finest wheat-flour and apply it to the swelling. Obedient to this advice, the lad obtained the remedy which the mysterious stranger had prescribed, and duly applied it according to his instructions; and when within a few days' time the damaged knee became once more as sound as the other, it was only natural that so contemplative a lad should have been persuaded that he owed his cure to an angelic visitant, and should have become more eager in his desire for the life of the cloister.

From that time forward it appears that Cuthbert combined with his humble calling an almost monastic discipline, but one final incident seems still to have been needed finally to determine his vocation. One night, as the little lad, tending his sheep upon the lonely hill-side, gazed upwards at the starlit sky, he saw on a sudden the heavens part asunder, whilst there

descended thence a brilliant shaft of light, down which, as he watched, a glorious host of Angels descended earthwards, and straightway reascended, bearing in their midst the soul of the blessed Aidan, Bishop of Lindisfarne.

This vision finally removed any doubts that S. Cuthbert entertained as to his future life; he left his sheep and, staff in hand, journeyed to the neighbouring Abbey of Melrose, founded by S. Aidan, of which Eata, one of that Saint's earliest English disciples, was then Abbot, and which he reached at a moment when the saintly Prior Boisil (afterwards reverenced in Scotland as S. Boswell), chanced to be standing at the entrance.

"Behold a servant of God!" exclaimed Boisil, as the shepherd youth approached the monastery gates, and Cuthbert's saintly life within the walls of this, his chosen refuge from the world, bore ample testimony to the prophetic insight of the speaker.

When the newly founded monastery of Ripon was confided by King Alchfrith to the care of Eata, the latter was accompanied thither by his most promising disciple, Cuthbert, but when, not long afterwards, owing to his refusal to abandon the Celtic use with regard to the observance of Easter, Eata surrendered his charge to Wilfrid, S. Cuthbert returned with him to Melrose.

It is related that during his sojourn at Ripon, where the strangers were especially committed to his care, the youthful monk one day discovered among the guests a young man, of most beautiful countenance,

but cold, weary and worn by a long night of travelling. S. Cuthbert washed and warmed his chilled feet, and then hastened away to fetch him bread hot from the oven. On his return, however, the stranger, apparently an angel in disguise, had disappeared, leaving behind him no trace of footsteps on the snow without, whilst on the table lay three loaves of finest wheat flour, fragrant and delicious.

It was at Melrose, where on the death of Boisil of the pestilence of 664, which the good Prior had himself foretold three years previously, he was, in accordance with the express wishes of the dying monk, unanimously elected as his successor, that S. Cuthbert by his missionary zeal won for himself the name of the "Apostle of the Lowlands."

Both before and after his promotion to the dignity of Prior, it was his delight to visit the neighbouring hamlets and villages, where, gathering round him the simple country folk, who were no less attracted by the angelic fairness of his countenance than by the divine eloquence of his words and the beauty of his example, he would preach repentance to his hearers, and move even the most careless amongst them to bring forth worthy fruits of penance. It would seem indeed that there was no time in S. Cuthbert's life, whether in the monasteries of Melrose and of Lindisfarne, or later in the stricter seclusion of Farne Island, when the Saint did not regard time spent in ministering to the needs of others as of fully equal value to the long hours spent by him in prayer, "well knowing," comments the Venerable Bede, "that He Who said,

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, said likewise, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

After a while, however, S. Cuthbert was summoned to a task that was far less congenial to his simple tastes. When, after the great Synod of Whitby, Colman, still unwilling to renounce the Celtic rule for fixing the date of Easter, resigned his monastery to Eata, who had by this time conformed to the decisions of the Council, it was to Cuthbert that this worthy Abbot, after he had himself vainly attempted to reconcile the monks of Lindisfarne to the changes he desired to institute, committed the office of Prior of the Northumbrian Monastery, trusting that his gentle influence would ultimately lead the monks under his care to the acceptance of the Catholic ritual. The event proved that this confidence in S. Cuthbert was not misplaced, and there is little doubt that it was more than aught else the noble and unselfish life that the latter lived amongst the brethren of Lindisfarne, that enabled him at the close of twelve years to look back upon a completed mission.

It would indeed have been strange if during these twelve years the monks of Lindisfarne had not learned to love and reverence their saintly Prior, who combined with the simple faith of the shepherd lad a marvellous sweetness of disposition, and a gentle patience which rendered him the willing and sympathetic counsellor of all who at any time appealed to him for help. It is easy therefore to picture their consternation when they learnt that in his desire for a closer and more uninterrupted communion with God, Cuthbert, seeing

his task completed, was now resolved, with the consent of his superiors, to retire to the little island of Farne, which was at that time uncultivated and untenanted, unless it were indeed by the host of evil spirits which were said to infest its solitudes.

On this lonely spot, occupying a cell built with his own hands, and so enclosed that nothing but the sky overhead could meet his gaze; subsisting on herbs and on the grain raised by the labour of his hands, and on the water from a fountain granted him in answer to his prayers, S. Cuthbert dwelt for eight years—years devoted solely to the mortification of the flesh and the training of the spiritual faculties, during which his only companions were the birds, that, in obedience to his commands, desisted from their raids upon such scanty crops as the poor soil of his island home would yield.

Specially attractive are the tales that tell of the sympathy that existed between the holy Anchorite and the animal creation, and more especially with the fowls of the air. If the Saint lacked for food, the eagles were ever ready to drop their prey for the provision of his needs; when he stood, as his custom was, up to the neck in water, to recite the Psalter or the Daily Offices, the sea-birds loved to flock around him, and to utter their weird cries as they circled above his head; and many a time did the monks, who occupied a small hospice, erected near the harbour for the accommodation of such visitors as desired to consult S. Cuthbert, declare that they had heard the Saint conversing with his feathered friends in a language

that was evidently intelligible to both parties. Another picturesque legend tells how on one occasion, when S. Cuthbert was chilled from kneeling overlong on the barren shore, two otters were seen to come to his rescue, chafing his numbed feet with their fur and licking his frozen limbs with their warm tongues, till the circulation was restored to them.

And ever since the death of this holy Hermit, "S. Cuthbert's Peace" has prevailed to defend on this tiny island of Farne the birds with whom during his life he held such friendly intercourse. It is said that when he lay dying, he bequeathed to the monks of Lindisfarne a small sum of money to be expended on their protection, and uttered a stern denunciation on whoever should violate this compact, a compact which, with few exceptions, has been religiously observed, even to the present day, so that the wild-fowl, who have naturally multiplied exceedingly under its beneficent influence, relieved of that fear of man which usually characterizes their species, will allow themselves to be handled and fondled in a manner that is unknown on any other spot upon our English coasts.

After eight years, however, a Synod was held at Twyford, by Archbishop Theodore, under the presidency of King Egfrith, at which S. Cuthbert was unanimously elected Bishop of Hexham. Letters and deputations were instantly dispatched, but with no effect; the Saint refused to abandon his island solitude, and it was only when the King himself, attended by Bishop Trumwin and other ecclesiastics, and by many

monks of Lindisfarne, sailed to Farne, and there, upon his knees, besought the saintly Hermit to accept the office to which he had been appointed, that S. Cuthbert, influenced mainly by the recollection of Boisil's former prediction that he should one day be raised to the episcopacy, consented with great unwillingness to return with them to the mainland, and to allow himself to be consecrated Bishop of Hexham, in place of Tunbert, who had been recently deposed from that See. Subsequently, however, in consequence of S. Cuthbert's manifest reluctance to abandon Lindisfarne, it was arranged that Eata should return to the See of Hexham, which he had originally held, whilst his former disciple should remain at Lindisfarne as Bishop.

For two years S. Cuthbert laboured incessantly in his new office, which he adorned with all kinds of episcopal virtues, "for that he both protected the people committed to his charge by his constant prayers, and excited them to the love of heavenly things by his most wholesome admonitions; while—that which is of the greatest assistance to the teacher—he first taught by his example that which he recommended by his words."

After this period, however, being divinely instructed of his approaching death, the Saint resigned his See and withdrew once more to the lonely island of Farne, there to prepare in solitude for his departure out of this world, and here, not long afterwards, he was overtaken by grievous pains, which lasted some three weeks, during which time he consented to allow

Herefrid, Abbot of Lindisfarne, to send two monks across to the Holy Island, who should minister to him in his dying moments. The end came about midnight on 20 March, 687, when the sad news was instantly flashed across to Lindisfarne by the appointed signal of two flaring torches, and S. Cuthbert's remains were at once conveyed, with due honour, to the monastery which was so intimately connected with his memory, of which they at once became one of the most treasured possessions.

During the Danish invasions, when Lindisfarne was destroyed, they were removed by the monks for safety to the Continent, till, after various wanderings, they were at last translated to the banks of the Wear, where in 995 a stone church was built over them by Aldhune, Bishop of Lindisfarne, who thenceforward removed his episcopal See to Durham, where the Saint's body had found its final resting-place. Since the desecration of S. Cuthbert's Shrine in the reign of Henry VIII, the exact site where his relics now repose remains a mystery—a mystery which it is said is known only to some few Benedictine monks, and which shall never be revealed until Mass is once more celebrated, according to the Roman Catholic rites, in Durham Cathedral.

S. EARCONWALD

BISHOP *d. end of 7th Century*

Of noble Saxon birth, this saint, renouncing the world from his youth, devoted all his patrimony to the foundation of religious houses. About the year

666, he established at Chertsey, in Surrey, a monastery, over which he himself presided, while at about the same date he built a convent at Barking in Essex, over which he placed as Abbess, his sister, S. Edilburga.

In 675 the fame of his sanctity induced King Sebba to summon him from his seclusion and to appoint him Bishop of London, in which capacity his piety and devotion won for him the love and respect of all with whom he came in contact.

A fantastic but beautiful legend is told with reference to the enlargement of S. Paul's Cathedral, in which the Bishop took a deep interest. The workmen, during the demolition of an ancient heathen temple, which was to supply room for the necessary additions to the Christian church, discovered a beautifully wrought antique coffin, adorned with strange gold lettering which they were unable to decipher. The Mayor, summoned in haste, ordered that the coffin should be opened, and within, to the general astonishment, was found the body of a man arrayed in regal vestments, and with a crown on his head, but in so perfect a state of preservation that he seemed to be asleep. S. Earconwald, who was at that time absent in Essex, was at once sent for, and on his arrival spent the night in prayer beside the coffin. Next morning he celebrated High Mass before the whole congregation, and then, returning to the grave and assuring himself that the most careful research had failed to identify the corpse, he turned to the dead man and inquired of him, in God's Name, who he was and the reason of his royal insignia.

To the amazement of the bystanders, the dead man instantly responded to the Bishop's invocation and explained that he was no monarch, but a judge who had lived in the "New Troy," that is to say the original city of London, which fable asserts to have been founded by one Brutus, the son of Æneas, after he had destroyed the ancient race of giants, many hundreds of years B.C. The crown and sceptre had been awarded to him because, being no respecter of persons, he had by his disregard of praise or blame earned for himself the title of "King of Judges," while the marvellous state of preservation in which they now found him, he attributed to the absolute integrity with which he had been accredited by the Heavenly King of Justice.

S. Earconwald next inquired of him as to the present abode of his soul, to which question the dead man replied with a groan that, because he had died a heathen, without the regeneration of Baptism, his soul, notwithstanding his good works, was condemned to the realms of darkness.

"Would God that thou mightest live till I have fetched water and poured it over thee in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost!" exclaimed the saintly Bishop, weeping. And even as he spoke some of his tears fell on the face of the corpse.

"Now praise I God, and thank thee, O Bishop; for the words which thou hast spoken and the tears that thou hast shed have supplied my Baptism," replied the just judge of ancient days, as a heavenly ray of

light flashed across his face; then, as he ceased speaking, his earthly remains crumbled to dust.[1]

S. Earconwald died on 30 April, towards the very close of the seventh century, and such was his reputation for holiness that even in the days of the Venerable Bede, miracles of healing were reported to have been effected by splinters from the horse-litter in which the saintly Bishop was wont to perform his journeys.

S. WILFRID

BISHOP *d. April 24th, 711*

Born in Northumbria, about the year 634, Wilfrid, whose home was rendered unbearable by a tyrannical stepmother, when only fourteen years of age, presented himself with his father's consent at the gates of the monastery of Lindisfarne, where he speedily distinguished himself by his marked abilities. Apparently, even at this early stage, he identified himself with the Roman party in the controversy that was still being waged concerning the date of Easter, and at the age of nineteen, having then completed his education, he obtained permission to journey to Rome in order to inquire more perfectly into the questions at issue.

Armed with letters of introduction from Eanfleda, the wife of King Oswy, he travelled first to the Court of King Earconbert at Canterbury, whence, after some delay, he was permitted to depart, in the year

[1] This legend is adapted from the Cotton MS., published by Mr. C. Horstman in his *Altenglischen Legenden*.

654, in company with Bennet Biscop, another young Northumbrian, for Italy.

After a brief sojourn with the Archbishop of Lyons, who, owing to his high esteem for the excellent qualities of the Saxon youth, was anxious to retain him in his diocese, Wilfrid and his companion reached Rome, whence, after some months of instruction, which confirmed him even more in his reverence for Roman customs, the former returned to Lyons, where he spent the next few years.

It appears possible that S. Wilfrid might have passed the remainder of his life in France, if it had not been that at the end of three years the Archbishop was condemned to death by the tyrant Ebroin. Desirous of sharing in the martyrdom of his patron, Wilfrid mounted the scaffold beside the venerable Archbishop, and was even preparing to lay aside his own garments, in the hope that the executioner would continue on the disciple the deed that he had but now perpetrated upon the master, when a rumour that the young stranger was an Englishman caused the officers of the law to intervene and to deny to Wilfrid the fate that he so eagerly anticipated.

After the death of the Archbishop, Wilfrid returned to England, where he was heartily welcomed by Alchfrith, the son of Oswy and the under-king of Deira, who, though originally a member of the Celtic Church, had recently, under the influence of his mother Eanfleda, joined the Roman Communion, and was therefore anxious to find a substitute for Eata, the Abbot of the Scotch Abbey of Melrose,

whom he had recently appointed to preside over his newly founded Monastery of Ripon.

The controversy concerning the observance of Easter had by this time reached its culminating point. Oswy himself, though educated under the Celtic use, appears to have been at first comparatively indifferent in the matter, and was certainly prepared to esteem the good qualities which he found in those who differed from him, if not in doctrine, at least in practice. Eanfleda, on the other hand, was a staunch adherent of the Roman use, which was, as should be remembered, far more closely allied to English Catholicism than to the Romanism of the present day, and it is easy to understand the inconvenience that must have arisen at the Northumbrian Court when it happened that the King was celebrating the Eastern festival, whilst his Queen was still observing Holy Week.

In his desire to determine once and for all the rights of this protracted controversy, which was certainly an immense hindrance to the foundation of the National Church as a united whole, Oswy now determined to summon a great Synod, which was to meet at S. Hilda's Monastery of Whitby (Streneshalch), in 664, where the debatable point should be finally determined by the champions of either side.

The Celtic party was represented principally by Colman, Bishop of Lindisfarne, Cedd, Bishop of London, and S. Hilda, the famous Abbess of Whitby; the Roman by Agilbert, who had succeeded S. Birinus as Bishop of Dorchester, and S. Wilfrid, who acted as his spokesman.

Since the different practice of the two Churches with regard to Easter has already been described in connection with the Mission of S. Augustine in the life of Ethelred, First King of the English, it is unnecessary to repeat it here; suffice it therefore to say that while the Celtic Church wrongly appealed to the traditional acquiescence of S. John in Asia in the rule they advocated, and in the case of the monks of Iona to the practice of S. Columba, the Roman Church based its authority upon the equally traditional ordinance of S. Peter.

The result of the Synod was practically a foregone conclusion; the King, who presided over it in person, appears to have been by this time strongly biased in favour of the Roman party, and Wilfrid was a debater of far more powerful merit than was his adversary.

The climax came, however, when, after Colman had appealed to the unimpeachable claims of a custom inaugurated by S. Columba at Iona, Wilfrid, in reply, contested the far superior authority of S. Peter, to whom our Lord had said, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it, and I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven."

To lay claim to the supremacy of S. Peter on the score of these words, was of course a misapplication of the text, since the "rock" referred to has been generally accepted by the Fathers of the Church to imply not S. Peter himself, but the grand confession that he had that moment made, whilst the Power of the Keys, to which he also appealed, was afterwards

delivered equally to all the Apostles, and consequently not to any individual person but to the Church of Christ.

But upon hearing these words, Oswy turned instantly to the Bishop of Lindisfarne. "Is it true, Colman," he asked, "that the Keys of Heaven were thus delivered to S. Peter?"

"Yes, certainly," was the answer, at once confirmed by S. Wilfrid.

"Then I tell you," replied the King, "that he is that Doorkeeper to whom I will not oppose myself, lest when I present myself before the gates of Heaven, there should be none to open to me."

And thus the controversy was at length concluded with results which undoubtedly proved of the utmost benefit to the Church in England, since besides paving the way for the nationalization of that Church it brought it into communion with the other Churches of Western Christendom.

It was only natural that Wilfrid's triumph at the Synod of Whitby should bring him more than ever into prominence amongst those in authority, and upon the death of Tuda, the successor of S. Aidan at Lindisfarne, he was appointed by King Alchfrith to that See, and at once departed for France, that he might, since the See of Canterbury was temporarily vacant, obtain Consecration from Agilbert, who shortly after the Council of Whitby had been appointed Archbishop of Paris. It was apparently owing to the honourable treatment that Wilfrid received in France, that it was nearly three years before he returned to his

new diocese, only to find that King Oswy, wearying of his long delay, had appointed S. Chad to the episcopal See which Wilfrid himself, immediately after his appointment, had transferred to York.

However great his disappointment may have been, Wilfrid quietly spent the next three years at his Monastery of Ripon, till Theodore, the newly appointed Archbishop of Canterbury, visited the North of England, and finding some flaw in the Consecration of S. Chad, deposed the latter and established S. Wilfrid in his room.

For some years all went well, but on the death of Oswy, the Bishop unfortunately quarrelled with King Egfrith, the son of the former, who had at first regarded him with special favour, by encouraging Etheldreda, Egfrith's Queen, to take the veil in the Convent of Coldingham—an act of indiscretion by which he also incurred the displeasure of the Archbishop, seeing that he had absolutely no right to do so without the full and free consent of her husband—and further by objecting to the King's second marriage with Ermenburga, sister of the King of Wessex, which Egfrith claimed to be perfectly justifiable on the grounds that his first wife was to all intents and purposes dead to him. This action naturally roused the indignation of Queen Ermenburga against S. Wilfrid, and it was very probably under the vindictive influence of the royal pair that Theodore, in the year 678, without consulting Wilfrid, determined to divide the Northumbrian diocese into four parts, and finally deprived the latter of his See. Wilfrid at once resolved on an appeal

to Rome — an appeal which formed an unfortunate precedent which was frequently followed in later years.

On his outward journey he was cast by a violent storm upon the Frisian shore—but it was a storm that actually preserved him from a worse fate than shipwreck, since his foes in England had arranged that he should be murdered at the port where he had originally intended to land—and here in Friesland he delayed for the remainder of the winter, labouring assiduously and with much success to convert the heathen barbarians, amongst whom he had been cast, to Christianity.

When the winter was over, however, he continued his journey, obtained an interview with Pope Agatho, who considered his case before a Council of fifty Bishops, held at the Lateran, and returned to England, armed with a papal bull, which ordered Theodore to reinstate the deposed Bishop in his diocese.

But Wilfrid had overestimated the authority of the papacy in England; Theodore paid no attention to the Pope's commands, and the King summoned a Council which decided that since the Bishop of York had thus aggravated his original offence by an appeal to Rome, he had rendered himself subject to imprisonment.

After nine months of close confinement Wilfrid was at last released, thanks to the influence of S. Ebba of Coldingham, the King's aunt, who warned the King that an illness of the Queen was due to her persecution of S. Wilfrid; but the latter was not yet restored to

his office, and since he was forbidden to preach in his own diocese, he proceeded to Sussex, where the inhabitants were still, with few exceptions, unconverted, and attached himself to a small community at Bosham.

At the time that S. Wilfrid came amongst them, a terrible drought had for three years desolated the whole district, and the inhabitants were reduced to such terrible plight that it was no uncommon thing to see men, in companies of forty or of fifty, cast themselves in pairs from the rocks into the sea and perish by drowning, rather than survive to die with their families of starvation.

S. Wilfrid at once set to work to relieve the bodily needs of his future converts. He instructed them in the art of deep-sea fishing, of which they had been hitherto entirely ignorant, and thus helped them to tide over, with the harvest of the sea, the years that were required to restore to the land the due rotation of the crops, even after the rain had come in abundance in answer to the prayers of the Saint. It was no wonder if, after this great deliverance, the people flocked to hear him preach and yielded readily to his persuasive teaching.

It was only after a sojourn of several years in Sussex, where the King had granted him the Isle of Selsey on which to found a monastery, that Wilfrid was at last invited to visit Archbishop Theodore in London, where he found that the old ecclesiastic, conscious of his approaching end, was anxious to make any amends in his power for the injustice with which he had most

assuredly treated S. Wilfrid. At the exiled Bishop's request, he wrote to Aldfrith, the bastard son of Oswy, to whom the Northumbrian thanes had, on the death of Egfrith, offered the kingdom, to entreat permission for Wilfrid's immediate return, and in response to the aged Archbishop's appeal, Wilfrid was duly reinstated both in the See of York—though only as it had been reorganized by Theodore—and in his Monastery of Ripon.

But in 691 Wilfrid found himself involved in fresh troubles, this time with Brithwald, the successor of S. Theodore, who was desirous further to subdivide the See of York, and to convert the Abbey Church of Ripon into a Cathedral. Wilfrid, for his part, stoutly resisted the change, and after vainly reminding the Council that met at Easterfield of the great debts that the Church owed him for his manifold services, once more appealed to Rome and was once more vindicated by the reigning Pontiff, John VI.

But on this occasion, on his return journey, the now aged Bishop was overtaken by severe sickness, and was carried in a litter to Meaux, where for four days and nights he lay speechless and senseless on what seemed likely to prove his death-bed. On the fifth morning, however, to the astonishment of all, he opened his eyes, and called for Acca, the priest, to whom he related that, while he slept, there had appeared to him, in bright apparel, one who declared himself to be S. Michael the Archangel, who, after telling him that, in answer to the prayers and intercessions of the brethren, his life should be spared for a season, had

promised that in four years' time he would himself return to fetch him hence.

Wilfrid in due course returned to England, where, however, Aldfrith still refused to grant him so much as an audience, but upon the death of the latter, which occurred not long afterwards, a Synod was convened by the Archbishop on the banks of the Nidd, where in the presence of the young King Osred, Wilfrid was duly appointed Bishop, not of York, but of Hexham.

But age and persecution had shattered Wilfrid's health—he continued for a while longer to journey to and fro throughout his diocese, strengthening and confirming as he went, but when some two and a half years later, whilst riding between Hexham and Ripon, he was seized with a second stroke, similar to that which had overtaken him at Meaux, he appointed Tatbert to replace him at Ripon, during the remaining years of his life, and then, in the chapter house of that monastery, leaning feebly on his staff, he relinquished the charge of the community with which he had long been so intimately connected.

S. Wilfrid lingered on for yet another eighteen months, which he occupied in setting in order the various religious houses in his diocese, till, on 24 April, 711, at his monastery of Oundle in Northamptonshire, S. Michael once more returned, at the close of the appointed term, to summon the weary Saint to his eternal rest. He was buried at Ripon, in the monastery that he had ruled for so many years, but in the year 959, as a precaution against the in-

cursions of the Danes, his remains were translated to Canterbury.

Even after his death, so tradition tells us, the presence of S. Wilfrid protected the religious houses over which he had presided in his lifetime. On one occasion—so the legend runs—the Monastery of Oundle, where the Saint had died, was set on fire by a band of outlawed nobles. Over one portion of the monastery, however, the flames could obtain no hold; it was the portion that contained S. Wilfrid's cell. At last, indignant at their failure to destroy the entire building, one of the marauders, carrying a flaming torch, wherewith he intended to ignite the dry straw with which the cell was filled, entered within, only to find himself confronted by a young man, arrayed in shining apparel, who bore in his hand a golden Cross—it was an Angel Guardian, who, in response to the intercessions of S. Wilfrid, was thus defending the dwelling that the Saint had occupied on earth.

S. EGWIN

BISHOP *d. December 30th, 719*

Renouncing in his early youth the brilliant career that his connection with the royal line of Mercia placed at his disposal, and eschewing all worldly pleasures, S. Egwin appears to have devoted himself entirely to a religious life, and to have fulfilled his duties in the priesthood with such zeal and devotion, as fully to account for the unanimous desire of both clergy and laity alike to elect him as third Bishop of

Worcester, in which office he distinguished himself both by his humility and by his discreet counsels.

It was most probably S. Egwin's unremitting zeal for the suppression of the many heathen customs and superstitions that still prevailed amongst his people, that accounts for the persecution raised against him, which led to his first journey to Rome to appeal against the deposition which King Ethelred, in response to the misrepresentations of the Bishop's enemies, had recently pronounced against him.

Tradition tells us that in order to render more arduous this journey, which, according to his own wishes, was to partake of the nature of a penance, the saintly Bishop, previous to his departure, secured two iron shackles on his legs, and flung the key that locked them into the River Avon, declaring as he did so that he would never believe himself to be completely absolved from his youthful sins till the key should be in some manner restored to him, or the fetters should be miraculously unloosed. The legend goes on to relate that when the Saint, at the conclusion of his long and painful journey, was one day seated at dinner in Rome, a large fish, recently caught in the Tiber, was placed before him, in which, when it was opened, was discovered the key that released him from these voluntary bonds.

It is, however, as the founder of Evesham Abbey, which he commenced building in the year 701, that S. Egwin's fame is best remembered in these later days.

The legend tells us that when S. Egwin was already

Bishop of Worcester, a herdsman, named Eoves, who was one day tending the episcopal flocks in the fields, beheld there a vision of the Blessed Virgin. That night Eoves went to his master and related to him all that he had seen, and accordingly the following morning the Bishop himself, barefooted and with only three attendants, resorted to the selfsame spot, where he beheld in like manner the Blessed Virgin, who, carrying in her hands a book and a cross, bestowed on him her benediction. Joyfully convinced that this vision was intended as a direct command to erect a monastery which should be dedicated to her who had thus revealed herself to him, S. Egwin at once proceeded to procure a grant of land, and on the spot which was thenceforth known as Eoves-Holm or Evesham, started, with the help of Offa, King of Essex, and Kenred, King of Mercia, upon the erection of a Benedictine monastery, dedicated in the name of Our Lady, which must have been in the days of its perfection one of the most magnificent religious houses in the whole of England.

In the year 708, in company with these two Kings, both of whom subsequently renounced their temporal kingdoms to embrace a monastic life, S. Egwin undertook a second pilgrimage to Rome, on his return from which, resigning his episcopal duties into the hands of his successor, he himself became the first Abbot of his own monastery, where he died on 30 December, 719. His remains were translated later to the Cathedral at Worcester.

And yet within two short years of its dissolution in 1539 S. Egwin's splendid edifice was reduced to a state

which could be described as " little more than a rubbish heap," while the great Tower, which, since it dates from the early part of the sixteenth century, must still have been in its first youth, and which, together with a few earlier fragments, is all that remains to testify to its past glories, was only saved from a similar fate by the townsfolk of Evesham, who purchased it for the sake of securing its preservation.

S. JOHN OF BEVERLEY

BISHOP *d. May 7th, 721*

A native of Harpham in Yorkshire, S. John of Beverley, after a careful education in the Schools of S. Theodore of Canterbury and of his famous colleague, Abbot Adrian, became a monk of the double monastery at Whitby, under the rule of its holy foundress, S. Hilda. He remained at Whitby until, upon the death of Eata, at the commencement of the reign of King Alchfrith, he was appointed Bishop of Hexham, in which office he displayed a personal devotion towards even the most repulsive of his flock, which is clearly demonstrated by the following story.

During his sojourn at Hexham, S. John was in the habit of withdrawing each Lent, for prayer and meditation, to a churchyard, some mile and a half distant, to which it was his custom to take with him some sufferer to whom he might minister comfort. During the Lent in question the object of his ministrations was a certain youth, who was quite unable to speak, and who in addition suffered from a horrible skin disease, so disgusting that it caused him to be

shunned by all his fellows. The Saint, however, without any outward token of the aversion that he must needs have felt for this pitiable object, after first making the sign of the Cross over his speechless tongue, gradually began to instruct him how to articulate certain sounds, and afterwards carefully taught him the pronunciation of the letters and words of his native language, till the poor fellow was at last in a position to communicate with his fellow-men. Then, with the assistance of a physician, he proceeded to treat the further maladies from which the unhappy outcast suffered, and finally, at the end of Lent, was able to restore him, completely cured, to his relations.

On the death of Bishop Bosa, who had been appointed to the See of York in place of the deposed S. Wilfrid, S. John, usually surnamed " of Beverley," after the double monastery which he had founded at that place, was transferred to York, whilst S. Wilfrid, in accordance with the terms decreed by the Council of the Nidd, in 705, was appointed to Hexham, which formed but a portion of the vast diocese over which he had originally ruled.

Very numerous are the miracles of healing attributed to S. John, the majority of which are recorded for us by his early disciple, Bercthun, who became the first Abbot of his beloved master's Monastery of Beverley, but the following circumstance, whilst it incidentally affords an interesting insight into the medical science of those days, reveals the humble diffidence with which the saintly worker of them regarded his own powers of healing.

As Bishop of York, S. John was one day visiting, as its Superior, the Convent of Watton, which was at that time under the rule of Abbess Hereburga. On his arrival at Watton on this particular occasion, S. John found the Abbess in deep distress, and on inquiry learned that a certain nun, her own daughter according to the flesh, whom she had also appointed as her successor, lay grievously sick with an inflamed arm that seemed likely to cause her death.

" But what can I do for the girl, if she is at death's door ? " asked the holy Bishop, in reply to the mother's entreaties that he would heal her daughter. " You have done very indiscreetly and unskilfully to bleed her on the fourth day of the moon ; for I remember that Archbishop Theodore, of blessed memory, said that bleeding at that time was very dangerous, because the light of the moon and the tide of the ocean are increasing."

Whilst deprecating, however, in this manner, any miraculous power on his own part, the Bishop willingly consented, in accordance with his pastoral duties, to visit the sick nun and to pray for her recovery, and no sooner had he left her bedside, where he had pronounced over the patient his episcopal benediction, than the pain disappeared and the swelling, in due course, abated.

A story related by Herebald, afterwards Abbot of Tynemouth, besides proving the prophetic instinct of the good Bishop, shows that while he devoted the greatest care to the spiritual training of his theological students, he was most anxious not to check them in any

harmless amusement without a cause. Herebald and his brother-students were one day riding with S. John when it occurred to one of them to ask the Bishop's permission to race their horses along the strip of grass that flanked the road—a permission that was granted after a moment's hesitation, on the condition that Herebald himself should take no part in the sport. Herebald protested, but without effect, and for a time rode somewhat sulkily beside S. John, watching the equestrian feats in which his companions were engaged, till at last, unable any longer to resist temptation, he too joined in the race, with the result that his horse, in jumping a ditch, threw him heavily to the ground, where he lay, with a fractured skull and with severe internal injuries, as one dead. All that night the Bishop knelt in prayer for his refractory pupil, over whom, since he was too ill to be moved, a tent had been erected, and in the morning, visiting the tent, he inquired of Herebald if he knew who it was that spoke to him. The young man opened his eyes, realizing in that instant that he owed his life to the fatherly intercessions of his Bishop, while S. John once more withdrew to offer further entreaties for the recovery of his penitent disciple.

At length, in the year 718, worn out with many years of devoted labour, S. John resigned his Bishopric of York into the hands of Wilfrid the Younger, and withdrew to his own monastery at Beverley, where he peacefully departed this life on 7 May, 721.

S. SWITHIN

BISHOP *d. July 2nd, 862; translated July 15th, 970*

Born at Winchester, educated at the Monastery of that city, admitted to Holy Orders by Bishop Helmstan, and subsequently appointed Prior of the monastery at which he had already been a scholar, S. Swithin, by his wisdom and his learning, so greatly attracted the admiration of Egbert, King of Wessex, that that prince selected him as his own private Chaplain, entrusted his younger son, Ethelwulf, to his care, and consulted him in many matters concerning the administration of the State.

When Egbert, predeceased by his elder son, died in 839, and was succeeded by this same Ethelwulf, who was not possessed of any great strength of character, the new King fortunately continued to follow the consistently prudent advice of his former tutor, and also that of another able and distinguished churchman, Alstan, Bishop of Sherborne, who as the King's Minister of War, on at least one occasion accompanied the royal army into the field against the Danes and defeated them.

Remembering the respect that King Ethelwulf entertained for his former teacher, it appears only natural that, when Helmstan, Bishop of Winchester, died, S. Swithin should have been appointed to succeed him, and it is the ten years during which the Bishop occupied this important See that afford us such a delightful picture of his saintly qualities.

Himself "a storehouse of virtues," as William of Malmesbury expresses it, it is said that by his holy living he caused his people to live virtuously; while so profound was his humility that, whereas he always performed his journeys to consecrate the many churches that he both built and restored, barefoot, he invariably travelled by night, lest this act of humility might attract attention, and "his mouth," writes Goscelin, "was always open to invite sinners to repentance; he ever admonished such as were standing to beware of falling, and such as had fallen to rise again without delay."

Besides building, at his own expense, a stone bridge across the Itchen at the foot of the hill on which Winchester stands, S. Swithin wisely counselled King Ethelbald, the successor of Ethelwulf, to erect fortifications round the Cathedral and cloisters—fortifications which probably supply the foundations of the present walls round the Close, and of which the value was proved in the reign of the following King, Ethelbert, after S. Swithin himself was dead, when the Danes, who had landed at Southampton, and marched to Winchester, perpetrating there innumerable horrors, left the Cathedral and its precincts entirely unharmed.

Amongst the simple legends with which the name of this holy Bishop is so closely connected, is one that tells of an old woman who, whilst crossing S. Swithin's bridge, with her apron full of eggs, was mischievously assaulted by some idle ne'er-do-weel, with the result that all her eggs were broken. To the

good fortune, however, of the poor woman, who was sadly regarding the shattered remains of her fragile belongings, the Bishop himself chanced to pass that way. He bade the woman show him her eggs, and raised his hand in blessing, "and behold, they were made whole and sound, whereat the woman was glad, and rendered thanks to God and to the holy Bishop."

After an episcopacy of ten years, S. Swithin died, 2 July, 862, and was buried, by his own desire, outside the Cathedral, where the rain from heaven might fall upon his grave, and where the feet of the passers-by might tread upon it. The familiar superstition which connects the Feast of the Translation of S. Swithin with the weather for the ensuing summer is founded on the legend which professes that when, in defiance of the Saint's express wishes, S. Ethelwold, a hundred years later, desired to translate his remains to a more honourable position within the Cathedral, the rain poured down for forty days with such incessant violence as to necessitate the abandonment of the attempt.

But in this instance it is necessary to confess that legend, in some part at least, has erred, since history positively declares that the remains of the saintly prelate were translated with every possible honour to a noble shrine within the walls of the Cathedral, in the year 970, on 15 July, the date on which the Festival of S. Swithin is still observed in our Prayer-book Calendar.

S. ETHELWOLD

BISHOP *d. August 1st, 984*

Even before his birth, which occurred at Winchester in 908, tradition relates that the future sanctity of S. Ethelwold was revealed to his mother in a dream, in which she beheld an eagle issue from her mouth, hover for a while over the surrounding city, and finally soar upwards, as if it would penetrate the very Gates of Heaven.

After a careful education Ethelwold was sent, when old enough, to the Court of King Athelstan, who, noticing the religious bent of his mind, strongly advised him to turn his thoughts to the priesthood, and, adopting this counsel, the young courtier was a little later ordained priest by S. Alphege the Bald, and then proceeded to Glastonbury, where he placed himself under the guidance of S. Dunstan, and where he soon proved himself not only a diligent scholar, but also a most skilful craftsman.

It was mainly through the instrumentality of S. Dunstan that Ethelwold was called from Glastonbury, about the year 954, to rebuild the Monastery of Abingdon in Berkshire, which had been destroyed by the Danes, and here he remained as Abbot until 963, instituting in the newly restored monastery the stringent observance of the Benedictine rule, the full particulars of which he had obtained from Fleury, which, if he had been allowed to follow his own inclinations, he would fain have adopted as his own refuge from the world.

In the year 963, S. Ethelwold was appointed Bishop of Winchester, and was duly consecrated to that See by S. Dunstan on the Vigil of the Feast of S. Andrew, and no sooner was he installed in his new diocese than he proceeded to obtain the permission of the King to expel all those secular clergy who refused to repudiate their wives and to conform to the Benedictine rule, and to replace them in his Cathedral by monks.

He caused a sufficient number of cowls to be carried into the choir, and into the midst of the canons, and after a pathetic discourse on the sanctity of the monastic profession, he left it to their choice, either to assume the religious habit or to quit the service of the Cathedral. Three only of the entire number were content to submit to the austerity of the Benedictine rule—the rest resigned their stalls, which were at once filled by monks from Abingdon.

These secular canons, however, were not prepared to abandon their position without a final struggle, and in 969, owing to their complaints to King Edgar of the injustice with which they had been treated, the latter summoned a Council to meet at Winchester, to determine the case between the secular and the regular clergy, and here, as legend relates, it was neither the King nor his Council that decided the controversy, but a voice from the Crucifix that occupied a prominent position in the hall, which, when it was suggested that matters should be allowed to revert to their former state, exclaimed in tones that were easily distinguished by those close at hand, " May that be far from you ! May that be far from you ! "

When he had thus effected the reform of both the Old and the New Minster of Winchester, S. Ethelwold, who, owing to his devotion to the sternest monastic discipline, is often styled "the Father of Monks," appears to have extended his work of reform to Ely, Peterborough, Thorney in Cambridgeshire, and possibly to other religious houses, in each of which he proved himself "meek as a lamb to such as were regular and humble, but terrible as a lion to such as were obstinate in evil."

In his own diocese, beneath the ever-increasing burden of physical infirmities, S. Ethelwold laboured assiduously for the spiritual wants of the people committed to his care; supplying also, from his private purse, the bodily needs of all who appealed to him for help. Deeply interested as he was in the beautifying of his own Cathedral Church, its adornment occupied a very secondary place in his affections, so much so that on one occasion, when a famine was raging in the land, he himself broke up and sold the gold and silver vessels of the sanctuary, declaring that men who were made after the image of God and who had been redeemed by the precious Blood of Christ, were of far more value than fragments of precious metal.

In the year 984, S. Ethelwold, now an old man and completely broken in health, paid what was to prove a last visit to his lifelong friend, S. Dunstan, and sorrowfully, as the two aged prelates parted, the Archbishop predicted to his former disciple, that they two should meet no more on earth, though it is possible

that even he himself scarcely anticipated the speed with which his words were to be verified.

S. Ethelwold had scarcely reached Beddington in Surrey, on his homeward journey, when he was overtaken by his last illness, and died 1 August, 984, and it was only his mortal remains that were carried back, in solemn procession, to his Cathedral city, there to be laid to rest amidst the sorrowing flock which he had tended with such unremitting care for more than twenty years.

S. DUNSTAN

ARCHBISHOP *d. May 19th*, 988

In the year 925 there was born at Glastonbury, of noble parentage, a child who was destined to become the most famous Saint, as also the most famous statesman, of his day.

We may well believe that even in his childhood Dunstan must have heard of the manner in which on the Candlemas before his birth, when all the tapers carried by the congregation were suddenly extinguished, that of his mother, Kynedride, alone was miraculously rekindled, in token of the sanctity of her yet unborn son. But even without this, I think that the associations that already clung about his birthplace—where S. Joseph of Arimathea, while resting on Weary Hill, there planted his pilgrim's staff which thenceforward blossomed yearly, as its

offshoots do this very day, on Christmas Eve; and where

> "in the island valley of Avilion,
> Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
> Nor ever wind blows loudly,"

the great King Arthur slept in some mysterious bower, till he should come again to right his country's wrongs—would have proved sufficient to exercise their influence on the hyper-sensitive mind of such an one as Dunstan.

It was about this period that a company of highly cultured Irish monks had made their abode at Glastonbury, and it was to their care that the youthful Dunstan was committed for an education which he pursued with such excessive zeal as to bring upon himself an attack of brain-fever, so severe that his relations had already abandoned all hope of his recovery, when, suddenly, eluding the vigilance of his attendants, he rushed one night, pursued, as he believed, by demons in the form of wild dogs, which he at length repulsed with the sacred sign, to the church, against which leaned the ladders of some workmen who during the day were busy in repairing the building, and in the strength of his delirium, made his way from the scaffolding to the roof, whence he must have fallen, apparently unconsciously, into the nave, where his friends found him, on the following morning, wrapped in the deep sleep of returning health.

At the Court of Athelstan, where Dunstan's noble birth easily won him admission, the youth soon became popular, not only on account of his handsome

face and courtly manners, but also owing to his musical talent and his other varied accomplishments, till, as is so often the case, this general favour incurred for him the envy of a certain number of his less attractive companions, who, attributing the ventriloquistic powers which Dunstan freely exercised to the influence of the Devil, resolved to test the truth of their accusations by plunging the unhappy youth into a horse-pond, in order to see whether he would sink or swim, and when he crawled, shamed and bedraggled, to shore, let loose on him their dogs, who, to the vivid imagination of their unhappy victim, became an incarnation of the demons of hell.

After this incident, feeling that life at Court was thenceforward an impossibility, Dunstan fled for protection to the house of his uncle, Alphege the Bald, Bishop of Winchester, hoping to obtain from his kinsman the permission to marry a young lady at Athelstan's Court, with whom he was desperately in love. But the career that S. Alphege had in view for his brilliant nephew was a very different one: he desired to enlist his evident genius and his exceptional capacities in the cause of the Church, and it was to this object that he employed not only all his eloquence, but also all the spiritual threats at his command, though for a time to no purpose. It was only when Dunstan became convinced that he was practically debarred by his diminutive stature and by his delicate health from the profession of arms, that he consented to embrace the only other that, as his ambition told him, could raise him to an equality with the King

himself. But the severity of the mental conflict that he endured before reaching the determination to renounce the earthly ties that so closely held him, is shown by the fact that it brought on a recurrence of his former malady, from which, however, he arose fully prepared to acquiesce in the design of the stern but kindly prelate who had tended him in his illness. On the completion of his restoration to health he was duly ordained priest by S. Alphege, and subsequently, according to the advice of that prelate, who was anxious to leave no loophole for his escape, withdrew to Fleury, there to undergo the necessary training in monasticism.

It was once more to Glastonbury that S. Dunstan directed his steps on his return from France, and since there was at that time no conventual life in that place in which he could participate, he adopted an even more rigorous course than that enjoyed by the monastic orders, and built himself a cell which is said to have been no more than five feet long by two and a half wide, and so low that he could not possibly stand upright. Here he lived a life of the strictest austerity, frequently wrestling, as he believed, with the arch-enemy himself in various bodily forms, and striving to escape the almost irresistible temptations that beset him by incessant labour at the forge that is so indissolubly connected with his name. Even those who know nothing further of the history of S. Dunstan have heard the legend that relates how on one occasion, when the latter was assaulted by the Devil in the form of a beautiful woman, he seized his

pincers and caught hold of his Satanic Majesty by the nose.

Far more attractive, however, than these supernatural and usually painful visions, which one is somewhat disposed to attribute to an overstrung sensibility or to the results of a brain that had not yet entirely recovered from the effects of recent illness, are the accounts of the cunning craft that S. Dunstan, not only as an anchorite, but even as an Archbishop, practised at his forge. He was an expert smith, who worked not only in iron, but also in gold and other precious metals; and it is a well-known fact that Malmesbury Abbey, as well as Abingdon, possessed bells of his casting, whilst the former possessed also an organ, which was the result of his handicraft.

It was apparently the influence of a woman which once more brought this zealous anchorite into communication with the outer world, when a certain widow lady, of royal birth, Ethelgiva by name, attracted by the fame of his conversion, resorted to Glastonbury to seek his spiritual guidance, and in the course of their conversations once more fired his ambition to measure his mental talents against those of his fellows; and it was perhaps largely owing to her interposition that when, on the death of Athelstan, Edmund, upon his accession to the throne, invited Dunstan to return to Court, his invitation met with a willing acceptance.

But once again, as on a former occasion, Dunstan found himself banished from Court, owing to the misrepresentations of jealous courtiers. This time, how-

ever, his loss of favour was of no long duration, since one day, when the King was hunting in Mendip Forest, a narrow escape from death led him to remember the injury that he had done to a possibly innocent man. The King, who had lost sight of his attendants, was alone in the forest, when the stag that he was pursuing dashed blindly towards a deep gorge and fell headlong down the precipice, still closely followed, even in death, by the hounds; whereupon Edmund, perceiving his imminent danger, whilst striving vainly to restrain his horse, uttered a vow that if his life were spared, he would at once recall Dunstan. Instantly his horse stopped on the very brink of the chasm, and the King, riding direct to Glastonbury, at once summoned Dunstan, and in his company offered up devout thanksgiving for his merciful deliverance from death, and then bestowed upon the youthful monk, who was still only twenty-two years of age, the vacant post of Abbot.

With the assistance of liberal contributions from the royal purse, augmented by the wealth which the noble widow, Ethelgiva, had on her death bequeathed in trust to the young anchorite, S. Dunstan at once proceeded to restore and re-endow the Abbey, to erect monastic buildings, and to found at Glastonbury a school which speedily became one of the most famous in England. It was an office in which one would think the saintly Abbot must have been completely in his element, since as a profound scholar, filled as he was with enthusiasm for his monastic vocation, it afforded ample scope for his pre-eminent

powers of organization, as well as leisure not only for the exercise of his craft, which has already been alluded to, but also to his skill in Art, and to his musical talents, to which some reference must now be made.

With regard to S. Dunstan's talents as a draughtsman, it may be mentioned that the Bodleian Library still possesses a frontispiece illuminated by his hand, on which is represented the Saint prostrating himself before the enthroned Christ, and also a child's head, bearing the superscription "Wulfric cild"—presumably a portrait of his younger brother, who died almost before he had attained to man's estate.

S. Dunstan's musical skill has already been mentioned in connection with his early attendance at Athelstan's Court, but I would take the opportunity of recording here two legends with regard to it, of which the one refers to his sojourn at Glastonbury, the other to a later date.

The former relates that on one occasion, when the saintly Abbot had hung the Æolian harp, on which he frequently played, upon the wall of the monastery, he and his monks were rejoiced to hear an angel from Heaven sweep the strings and draw from them the anthem that commences "Gaudent in Cœlis" (They rejoice in Heaven).

The second tells that, when at Edgar's Court, Dunstan, who was waiting one Sunday to celebrate Mass till the King should return from hunting, fell asleep, and, having witnessed in his dream a solemn service in Heaven, when he awoke dictated to his

attendant the Kyrie, since known as the " Kyrie rex splendens," which he had heard rendered by the angels in his vision.

It is the murder of King Edmund at the hands of the robber Leofa that marks the commencement of the political career of this great Saxon Churchman, since it was at the accession of King Edred, who, owing to the tender years of his two nephews, of whom the elder Edwy was still only nine years of age, succeeded his brother on the throne, that he found himself entrusted with the care of the royal treasure, which he was bidden to preserve at his own Abbey of Glastonbury.

Throughout his reign, which lasted from 946 to 955, Edred, who suffered throughout his reign from some painful chronic malady, seems to have been peculiarly subservient to his ministers of State, of whom Dunstan speedily rose to be the chief, and the offer of the Bishopric of Winchester, which S. Dunstan refused, owing to his deep attachment to his royal patron, may be regarded as a token of the favour in which the latter held him. It should be noted, however, that already on this occasion Dunstan is reported to have clearly stated that should Odo die, he might feel constrained to accept the succession to the throne of Canterbury. It is also avowed that in consequence of his refusal he was warned by a vision of Apostles, and notably of S. Andrew, who on that occasion acted as their spokesman, and for whom Dunstan had a special devotion, that if further Sees were offered him it would prove his bounden duty to accept them.

In the year 955, however, Edred died, and was succeeded by his elder nephew, Edwy the Fair, still a youth of only sixteen years of age, of whom the monkish historians write that he was the most profligate and tyrannical of all unwise rulers, whilst others, who were perhaps less prejudiced against him, affirm on the contrary that "this King wore the diadem not unworthily."

But whatever may have been the truth of these rival assertions, this much is certain, that on the very night of the coronation feast an incident occurred whereby S. Dunstan brought upon himself the royal displeasure. The youthful King, who, as it appears, had recently contracted a marriage with the young and beautiful Elgiva, which, though the exact relationship between the two is still uncertain, came, according to the strict Benedictine views, within the prohibited degrees, retired early from the banquet-hall to seek the society of his adored wife and of his mother-in-law, Ethelgiva. The nobles, not altogether unnaturally, resented this withdrawal on the King's part, as an insult to their own dignity, and, inflamed as they were with wine, insisted that Dunstan, Abbot of Glastonbury, and the Bishop of Lichfield, should follow Edwy and induce him to return. It must be urged in defence of Dunstan that he probably entirely agreed with the Benedictine censures on what was regarded by that Order as an illegal marriage, but though this consideration amply vindicates his stern reproof of the young King's action, it does not suffice to excuse him for subsequently losing his temper over

Edwy's resistance, and dragging the latter, by main force, back to the company of his nobles, or for the obloquy and brutal threats which he is said to have heaped upon both Elgiva and her mother.

It was not long, however, before the King retaliated on his minister by accusing him of misappropriation of the funds that during the last reign had been entrusted to his care—a charge which Dunstan, though possibly completely innocent, was unable to refute, and in consequence of which he soon found his property sequestered, while he himself was banished from the kingdom and forced to seek a refuge at the Monastery of S. Peter's in Ghent. But it may be remarked that this enforced absence from England, undeserved as it may have been, had at least one good result, in that it entirely vindicates Dunstan from any participation in the ghastly atrocities inflicted by order of Archbishop Odo on the unhappy Elgiva, which were the cause not only of her own death, but very probably also of that of her broken-hearted husband.

S. Dunstan's banishment had only lasted one year, when Edgar, Edwy's younger brother, who, owing to the former's growing unpopularity, was, in the year 957, elected King of all the country north of the Thames, recalled the exiled Abbot in order to appoint him to the vacant See of Worcester, to which was added a year or two later the charge of the diocese of London. Legend relates that during the consecration of Dunstan by Archbishop Odo, it was noticed that the Primate had, for the name of Worcester,

substituted that of Canterbury, a proceeding which the latter explained by alleging that he knew that Dunstan must soon succeed him in the metropolitan See.

In 959 Archbishop Odo died, and Alfsin, Bishop of Winchester, who had been elected to succeed him, was frozen to death in the Alpine passes, during his journey to Rome to obtain his pall. The next choice fell upon Brighthelm, Bishop of Wells, but, before his election was completed, Edwy died, and Edgar, who was thus left sole monarch of England, at once proceeded to set the appointment on one side and to exalt Dunstan instead to the Primacy.

The character attributed to Edgar the Peaceful differs as widely as that of his brother Edwy, according to the source from which it is derived, since whereas, according to the monastic estimates he would appear to have been all that is good and noble, the secular historians maintain that he was most exceptionally base, mean and tyrannical. It would seem, however, that in his younger days at least he must have shown a disposition to profligacy, since all are agreed in the story of his violation of the chastity of the nun Wulfrida, who thus became the mother of the famous S. Edith of Wilton, and in the penance which was consequently inflicted upon him by S. Dunstan, who, in addition to the fasting and discipline enjoined upon the penitent, prohibited him from wearing his crown during a period of seven years, at the end of which time he himself solemnly recrowned him at Bath.

Another story that is told of the excommunication

by S. Dunstan of a wealthy nobleman, who had contracted a marriage within the prohibited degrees, clearly indicates the Archbishop's attitude towards the claims of the papacy over the Church of England. The Earl, bitterly resenting the sentence of excommunication pronounced against him, appealed to the Pope for its remission, with such success that the Archbishop received a papal command to restore the excommunicated noble to his former privileges. "When I see the excommunicated person penitent for his faults," said Dunstan, "I will most willingly obey his Holiness' commands; but till that happens, God forbid that I should do anything to cause the nobleman to continue in his sin and to insult the discipline of the priesthood." The event proved the wisdom of Dunstan's sterner counsels, since the Earl, realizing at length the impossibility of evading the consequences of his sin, eschewed his unlawful marriage, and throwing himself as a penitent at the feet of the Archbishop, readily obtained from the latter the absolution that he now sincerely sought.

It was probably largely owing to the vast influence exercised by S. Dunstan over the King's weaker character, that the reign of Edgar proved of such benefit to the prosperity of his subjects, and it was this influence, which was largely directed towards the amalgamation of the English and Danish nations, that won for the monarch in question the attribute of "the Peaceful."

Even in Dunstan's early days at Athelstan's Court, when he himself was only eighteen years of age, he

appears to have been largely instrumental in the elevation of Odo the Dane to the dignity of the Archbishopric. It was owing to him that S. Oswald, Odo's nephew, and consequently also a Dane, was promoted successively to the Sees of Worcester and of York, and it was by means of various such appointments, both ecclesiastical and civil, as well as by the concession to the Danes of a justice equivalent to that which was administered to their English neighbours, that an object which was so manifestly beneficial to the interests of both nations was at last successfully accomplished.

From an ecclesiastical point of view, however, it is mainly to his efforts to restore the monks to the position which, during the recent Danish invasions, had so largely been usurped by the secular clergy, that the principal interest of S. Dunstan's life attaches. The movement was apparently inaugurated in 961 by the consecration of S. Oswald, the nephew of Odo, who was himself ardently desirous of this reformation, to the See of Worcester, and by that of S. Ethelwold, who through Dunstan's influence had since 954 held the office of Abbot of Abingdon, where he had introduced the Benedictine rule, to the See of Winchester, and it was under the united influence of S. Dunstan and these two other prelates that during Edgar's reign no less than forty-seven monasteries were either built or reclaimed from the secular clergy.

The story of the Council assembled at Winchester, in 969, at which the secular clergy appealed to King Edgar against the harsh decrees of Ethelwold, the

Father of Monks, belongs more especially to the history of that Saint. Suffice it therefore to say it was followed in 978 by a Council convened at Calne by Edward, Edgar's successor, at which the King himself was not present, which was held, not as usual in the open air, but in the upper room of some private house or castle, and at which the severity which had recently been displayed towards the married clergy was urged with bitter resentment by the secular party. The Archbishop, who, it must be mentioned, had taken far less severe measures in his own diocese than those practised by S. Ethelwold at Winchester or by S. Oswald at Worcester, attempting no reply, appealed to Heaven for a judgment on the cause in question. Scarcely had he ceased speaking, when, with a crash of breaking timber, the floor of the room in which the Council was seated gave way, and all save Dunstan and his party, who clung to the one sound beam that supported the apartment, were precipitated into the hall beneath, whereupon, since but few escaped without the loss of life or limb, popular opinion at once decreed that the case had been determined by the special intervention of Providence. Some, indeed, arguing largely from the absence of the young King Edward, whose death would have been an incalculable loss to the monastic party, would accuse Dunstan as the originator of this catastrophe, but I think that, setting aside the comparative indifference with which the sanctity of life was regarded in those more barbarous days, we may safely, even on the lowest grounds, absolve the great Archbishop from

what could only be regarded as a most foolish diplomatic blunder.

The murder of the young King Edward in the following year was a bitter grief to that saintly prelate, and it was with manifest reluctance that he consented to officiate at the coronation of his young stepbrother, Ethelred, whose future misfortunes he is said to have foretold on that occasion in the following prophetic terms :—

" Because thou hast aspired to the Crown by the death of thy brother, whom thy mother hath murdered, therefore hear the word of the Lord : The sword shall never depart from thine house, but shall rage furiously all thy days, to the destruction of thy seed, till such time as thy kingdom shall be delivered to a nation with whose customs and language the people whom thou now governest are unacquainted "—words which were amply verified in the subsequent history of the ill-fated Ethelred, surnamed " the Unready."

For the remaining years of his life S. Dunstan, owing perhaps to the extreme youth of the new King, continued to exercise a considerable, though probably a waning, influence over the affairs of the kingdom; but though he could never be accused of any neglect of his episcopal duties, it seems probable that, after the death of S. Edward the Martyr, a larger proportion of his time was spent at Canterbury, and it was here, at Ascensiontide, in the year 988, that he passed, at the age of sixty-three, to his eternal reward.

On the Feast of the Ascension, 17 May, S. Dunstan, conscious of his approaching end, preached three times,

with an eloquence which exceeded that for which he was so justly famed, and which left with its sorrowful hearers the impression that he was addressing them for the last time. That afternoon he pointed out to his companions the spot where he desired to be buried, and on the following day, Friday, he was taken seriously ill. The account of his death I would give in the beautiful words of the monk Adelard, as they have been rendered into English by the late Dr. Stubbs, Bishop of Oxford.

"On the morning of the Sabbath, when the matin hymns were now finished, he bids the holy congregation of the brethren come to him. To whom again commending his spirit, he received from the heavenly table the viaticum of the Sacraments of Christ which had been celebrated in his presence; and giving thanks to God for it he began to sing: The merciful and gracious Lord hath so done His marvellous works that they ought to be had in remembrance. He hath given meat unto them that fear Him. And with these words in his mouth, rendering his spirit into his Maker's hands, he rested in peace."

S. ALPHEGE

ARCHBISHOP AND MARTYR *d. April 19th*, 1012

On a certain night, during the latter half of the tenth century, terror and dismay reigned among the monks of Bath Abbey. Regardless of the protests of Brother Alphege, who had recently joined their community from the Monastery of Deerhurst, in

Gloucestershire, and who had plainly told them that they had done better to remain in the world than to become imperfect monks, one of their number, who, together with many of his companions, had abandoned the original purity of the Benedictine rule, and had been wont to devote the earlier hours of darkness to unseemly revels, had been overtaken by a sudden and terrible death, and had that very day been laid by his brethren to rest, within the Abbey precincts.

But that same night, when silence had already fallen upon the sleeping community, the monastery was aroused by heartrending cries that issued from the newly made grave. The monks, in their alarm, hastened to the spot, to find a troop of demons busily belabouring, with whips and scorpions, the disinterred body of their dead companion ; and it was only when Alphege, who, disturbed at his devotions, had joined the other monks around the open grave, had exorcised the evil spirits and pronounced absolution over the remains of their victim, that the corpse could be once more replaced in its tomb, where it rested thence-forward in peace.

An event such as this was bound to produce a powerful effect on the hearts of those who had participated in the misdoings of the departed monk, and to increase the influence of the austere and saintly Alphege, who, after living for some years as a recluse within the walls of the Abbey buildings, was, much against his will, elected Abbot of the Community.

But S. Alphege was not suffered to remain long in

the seclusion of the cloister, since on the death of S. Ethelwold, Bishop of Winchester, in 984, S. Dunstan, directly instructed, or so it was commonly believed, by S. Andrew the Apostle, at once appointed the reluctant Abbot of Bath, who was then only thirty years of age, to the vacant See.

Four years later, in 988, S. Dunstan died, and though it was not till 1006 that Alphege succeeded him in the See of Canterbury, he became from that time forward the chief adviser of Ethelred the Unready—a truly thankless task, since this King, as we are led to believe, was in nothing so unready as in the acceptance of prudent counsels.

Since the year 981 the Danish and Norse marauders, under the leadership of Sweyn, the exiled prince of Denmark, had resumed their attacks upon various points of the kingdom, which they were now determined to annex—attacks which the dissensions between the King and his nobles and the strange apathy of its inhabitants, who seemed utterly unable to realize the need of co-operation, rendered the country powerless to resist. In 991 the King's forces suffered a severe defeat in East Anglia, and it was after this battle that Ethelred ill-advisedly resorted to the dangerous experiment of purchasing peace from his assailants. The large sum demanded as its price by the invaders was raised; the treaty, as might have been expected, was concluded only to be broken, and each constantly recurring invasion, which left behind it, in its trail, endless misery and destruction, was terminated only by the payment of an ever-

increasing indemnity, which soon came to be recognized as an annual tribute.

It is true that S. Alphege, by his diplomacy, had, in 994, detached Olaf, King of Norway, from his alliance with Sweyn, who was now, owing to the death of his father, King of Denmark, and had induced the former to embrace Christianity and to renounce his designs upon this country—a bargain which he loyally fulfilled. The Danes, on the other hand, regardless of their share in the newly established treaty, still persisted in their desultory invasions, to which Ethelred only once, in an enterprise that failed owing to the treachery of his own officers, attempted serious opposition, till at last the King, in his despair and weakness, without heeding the contrary advice of the Bishop of Winchester, had recourse to a still more fatal expedient.

The truces which, with the so-called "danegelt," purchased for the country a temporary respite from its oppressors, included an extraordinary clause, which clearly indicated, if such proof were necessary, the abject plight to which the nation was already reduced—a degrading provision which ordained that those Danes who, during the summer, had devastated the country far and wide, might, at their pleasure, quarter themselves, during the winter months, upon the English populace, who were compelled, during that period, to support their unwelcome guests.

But on S. Brice's Day (13 Nov.), in the year 1002, the same year in which the King, by his marriage with Emma, daughter of Richard, Duke of Normandy,

had laid the foundation of the future conquest of his dominions by the Normans, a terrible massacre of the invaders was organized by the King himself, throughout the whole extent of his kingdom. Each householder was duly bidden, regardless of the sex or age, the rank or station of his guest, to murder at an appointed hour, whatever Dane might chance to partake at that season of his hospitality, and it was to the misfortune of England that, among the victims of that ghastly tragedy, was the Princess Gunilda, sister of King Sweyn, herself a Christian, who with her husband and children shared the fate of her compatriots.

No sooner did this tale of horror reach the Danish shores of the Baltic, than King Sweyn vowed bitter vengeance against the unhappy Saxons; an expeditionary force, under his personal supervision, sailed to England and ravaged a vast portion of the country from Exeter to Salisbury, and in each of the following years the terror of the Danes swept across the length and breadth of the kingdom, which Sweyn had sworn to wrench from the hand of Ethelred and his heirs.

S. Alphege, who since 1006 had occupied the See of Canterbury, continued to make many prudent, though vain, efforts to stem the tide of the invasion; but the armies that were successively raised by the King failed, each in its turn, owing to the treachery of its commanders, to effect its purpose, and at length it became clearly evident that no human power could avail to save the country from its inevitable doom.

At last, in the autumn of 1011, the city of Canterbury was surrounded by a strong Danish force. Many of its inhabitants fled, and S. Alphege was strongly urged to follow their example; but to no purpose. With resolute devotion he remained steadfast at his post, and became the very mainstay of the resistance. For twenty days he carried on a successful defence; for twenty days the services of the Cathedral were regularly maintained, so that each soldier might take up his position on the ramparts, duly fortified by the Sacraments of the Church; but at the last, owing, it would seem, to a private quarrel between two of the King's favourites, who placed their personal interests before the needs of their country, Canterbury was betrayed into the hands of the enemy.

Terrible scenes ensued; the Cathedral was burnt, the city sacked, and the inhabitants, without any respect for sex, age or station, were either put to the sword or preserved for the worse fate of slavery.

Loaded with chains, the Archbishop, who had dared to rebuke the triumphant Danes for this butchery of innocent persons, who had only borne their humble part in a defence of which he confessed himself to be the instigator—with a refinement of cruelty, was first led to witness the final conflagration of his own Cathedral. Afterwards, since he persistently rejected the offer of a ransom, which could only have been raised by the sale of Church property, which he steadfastly refused to appropriate to his own necessities, he was carried away by the Danes and cast for seven months into a loathsome dungeon.

Towards the end of this time, however, a terrible pestilence broke out amongst the armies of the invaders, and the latter, who, though pagans, were well aware of the saintly reputation of their unfortunate captive, appealed to the holy Archbishop, on Maundy-Thursday of the year 1012, for the assistance of his prayers. S. Alphege, in response to their requests, asked for bread, and when it was brought to him, after blessing it, handed it to the messengers, with the instructions that it should at once be distributed amongst the sufferers.

Two days later, finding that all those who had partaken of this consecrated bread were perfectly restored to health, the Danish commanders once more summoned the imprisoned Saint into their presence and again offered him his release, but still only on the condition that he should pay a ransom of 3000 marks.

" You press me in vain," replied the saintly Archbishop, whose constancy was in no way diminished by these weary months of confinement, " I am not the man to provide Christian flesh for pagan teeth, by robbing my poor countrymen to enrich my enemies," and the Danes, finding threats and persuasions to be alike of no avail, ordered him to be conducted once more to his prison cell.

But here, amid so much that is historical fact, it may not be amiss to insert a strange legend, concerning these last days of S. Alphege's life on earth.

It relates that on the night following that on which S. Alphege had been thrust once again into his lonely

dungeon, the Prince of Darkness, making, as it would appear, a final effort to rob S. Alphege of his crown of martyrdom, in the disguise of an Angel of Light, entered his prison, and, like the Angel who in apostolic days released S. Peter from the hands of Herod, led him, nothing doubting, into the open country, till, when the two had reached the centre of a marshy and low-lying district, he suddenly deserted him. Instantly recognizing the deadly peril that he had so barely escaped, S. Alphege sank upon his knees in fervent gratitude for his great deliverance from the Powers of Evil, whereupon, in response to his earnest prayer, a heavenly messenger, instantly dispatched to his succour, appeared to lead the Saint, who was entirely ignorant of the way of return, back to his prison, joyfully to await his approaching martyrdom.

The following night, so the legend continues, S. Dunstan, surrounded by a host of angelic spirits, appeared to the imprisoned Saint, and assured him that the very next day should witness the conclusion of his weary trial.

On the following day, 19 April, 1012, S. Alphege was once more led before his persecutors, who were at that time holding high festival at Greenwich, and here for the last time they clamoured round him for the gold that they so greedily desired, till, realizing at last that they would never obtain that which, in his opinion, he had no right to bestow, their patience finally exhausted, they prepared to make an end of their victim. They gathered up the remains of their heathen revel—bones, horns of beasts, or whatever

came first to hand—and after forcing the Archbishop to his knees with their battle-axes, they hurled these missiles at him with such force as to lay him half-dead upon the ground.

"Look, O Good Shepherd, to the children of Thy Church, which I now commend to Thee!" prayed the dying Saint, and to this reiterated intercession for his flock he added a prayer for his murderers, till at length a Danish soldier and a Christian convert, more merciful than his companions, completed this lingering martyrdom with his battle-axe.

It is said that the Danish leaders, when they had found time for cooler reflections, repented them somewhat of the deed that they had thus cruelly committed, and consequently delivered the body of S. Alphege, without any demand for payment, to his friends, by whom it was reverently conveyed to London and buried with due honour in S. Paul's Cathedral.

Ten years later, strangely enough, it was carried back by the Danish King, Canute, in a Danish barge, attended by a noble retinue of Danish courtiers, to Canterbury, there to be laid beside the remains of the Saint's former friend and predecessor, S. Dunstan.

S. WULSTAN

BISHOP . . . . *d. January 19th*, 1095

S. Wulstan, the last Bishop of the Anglo-Saxon period, was born at Long Itchington in Warwickshire, of pious parents who, when the education of their

son, which was conducted at the Monasteries of Evesham and of Peterborough, was completed, parted by common consent, in order that they might thus enter different religious communities in the city of Worcester.

Following their example, Wulstan, whose life, from his earliest childhood, had been remarkable for its purity and innocence, entered the Cathedral Priory at Worcester, where, by his humility and self-denial, he so peculiarly attracted the notice of his superiors, and more especially of the Bishop under whose special direction he had placed himself, that he was successively appointed to the offices of Master of the Novices, Precentor and Treasurer of the said Priory, and at length, twenty years after his admission as a novice, was himself elected Prior.

To the ascetic mind of the Saint, however, that which others would undoubtedly have regarded as promotion was but the signal for increased discipline and devotion, and it is of this period of his history that we are told that what rest he took at night was taken not in a bed or on a couch, but upon a hard bench in the Church, whilst his head rested, not on a pillow, but on the book that he had just been reading or against the desk where he had been praying. Frequently, during Lent, he would abstain entirely from food for days together, whilst on other days his sparing meals consisted only of bread and vegetables, varied only on Sundays, "out of reverence for the Festival," by a little fish and wine.

A characteristic legend relates that up to a certain

period in his life he consented, on rare occasions, to partake of meat or fowl, but after finding that on one occasion his attention during Mass was distracted by the fragrant odours of roast goose that issued from the kitchen close at hand, he thenceforward pledged himself to abstain from all such delicacies.

In 1062, when Aldred, Bishop of Worcester, was transferred to York, S. Wulstan, to his utter dismay, found himself unanimously elected to succeed to the vacant See; such indeed was his reluctance to accept an office of which he deemed himself utterly unworthy, that it was only the reproof of an aged hermit, named Wulfsi, who was much revered for his sanctity, that availed to persuade him to submit to the will of his superiors. Their choice, however, was fully justified by the holy life and devoted service of the new Bishop, who, when at Worcester, never remitted any austerity of his monastic life; who never passed through a town or village without entering into the Church to pray or preach; who attracted thousands by his plain and outspoken teaching, in which he openly confessed himself to be a man of like passions with his hearers, and who reproved those who would sometimes have accused him of acting in a manner derogatory to his office with the words, "He that is greatest amongst you, let him be your minister."

But it is not only for his spiritual ministrations, but also as a notable builder and restorer of churches that S. Wulstan's fame is handed down to us—a restorer, it should be noted, who frequently deplored the destruction that was involved in the performance of

his task. It is said that on one occasion, when the Cathedral of Worcester erected by S. Oswald was in course of demolition, S. Wulstan was observed to be watching the work with tears in his eyes, and when his attendants asked him why he did not rather rejoice at the prospect of the more magnificent edifice that was to replace the old, the good Bishop replied sadly: "We are destroying the work of Saints. They knew how to devote their lives to God and to draw others to Him, however poor the roof that covered them. All that we think of now is to rear up piles of stones, while we leave uncared for the souls of men."

But another side of S. Wulstan's character, his dauntless intrepidity, is best illustrated by the legend that records the attempt of the Conqueror and of his Primate Lanfranc to depose the Saxon Bishop on the score of his scanty learning and of his ignorance of the French language.

When S. Wulstan, who had already been summoned to London, was brought before Lanfranc in Synod, he found the latter, in company with the King and all his Norman Bishops, seated in Westminster Abbey, close beside the tomb of S. Edward the Confessor, where the Primate at once proceeded to demand from Wulstan the restitution of his crosier, on the plea that he was unfitted, owing to his simplicity, to retain it. "Most truly, my Lord Archbishop," replied the Saint, "do I acknowledge my own insufficiency, and did so long ago when the clergy elected me and when my Royal Master, King Edward, with the concurrence of the Apostolic See, forced me to submit my shoulders to

so great a burden. Willingly therefore do I now resign my crosier, since such is the will and pleasure of yourself and of this holy Synod; but I will resign it to him who delivered it into my hands."

Advancing thereupon towards the tomb of the departed Saint, he addressed the Holy Confessor in the following terms:

"My Royal Master, we are this day called in question, both yourself and I; you for your imprudence in constraining me, and I for my presumption in suffering myself to accept a dignity and office of which I was unworthy and incapable. It is true that whilst you were here among mortal men, you might easily have been mistaken. But now that you are united to God, Who is the Eternal Truth, you can no longer be liable to error. To you therefore I resign this staff, begging that you will be pleased to bestow it on some other, whom you know to deserve it."

Raising his crosier in his hands, he then thrust it against the tomb before him, where, to the amazement of all beholders, it remained firmly imbedded in the marble. The Bishop's Chaplain sought to remove it, but in vain; the Primate failed; the King failed likewise; and at length Lanfranc, with tears of remorse, earnestly besought S. Wulstan to reassume the dignity of which he had sought to deprive him, adding in conclusion, in tones of firm assurance: "The hand that refused the crosier to us, will freely resign it to thee"—words that were instantly verified, when S. Wulstan, after a brief prayer before the tomb,

grasped the crosier, upon which the marble instantly relaxed its hold.

From this time forward it was only natural that S. Wulstan should be regarded with high respect and favour both by the Conqueror and the Archbishop, though it is related that his blunt speech and simple Saxon ways won for him a considerable amount of derision from the Norman nobles, on the occasions that he was obliged to attend at Court—a derision which, according to his biographer in the *Lives of the Saints*, published, as I believe, at the suggestion of the late Cardinal Newman, did not pass altogether unchallenged.

It is said that on one occasion Geoffrey, Bishop of Coutances, whilst rebuking S. Wulstan for the simplicity of his attire, inquired why he did not abandon his humble lamb-skin for the sable, beaver, or fox adopted by his Norman colleagues.

"The skins of such shifty animals may serve for such experienced men of the world," replied S. Wulstan drily, "but for myself I am a plain man and content with lamb-skin."

"But could you not at least exchange your lamb-skin for cat-skin?" retorted Geoffrey, who was unwilling to abandon his point.

"Believe me, my lord," retorted S. Wulstan, with that quaint humour of which he was evidently a master, "I have often heard sing 'Agnus Dei,' but never 'Cattus Dei.'"

It is said that in later days, when he heard the English complain of the oppression of the Normans, S. Wulstan

would reply to them, "This is the scourge of God for your sins, which you must needs endure with patience": and that if his hearers retorted that the Normans were no better than the English, he would further add, "God often employs the wicked to chastise His servants for their good, and not considering who they are that thus afflict us, we should accept all chastisement as sent from God, Who to correct His children often uses a rod which He afterwards casts into the fire."

It is said that at the close of S. Wulstan's long life, a great part of whose latter years had been spent in the successful suppression of the slave-trade, which at that time infected Bristol, as well as many other English ports, at the very hour of his death, which occurred on 19 January, 1095, he appeared in a vision to his friend, Robert, Bishop of Hereford, to enjoin him to hasten from Cricklade, where he was then staying, to Worcester, in order to officiate at his burial. To which another legend adds that in like manner as no human authority had prevailed to deprive S. Wulstan of his crosier, so now none was able to draw from his dead finger his episcopal ring of office, which he had previously foretold should be taken from him neither in life nor in death, and which was consequently buried with him in his Cathedral Church of Worcester.

S. WILLIAM OF YORK

ARCHBISHOP *d. June 8th, 1154*

The son of Earl Herbert and of Emma, sister of King Stephen, little is known of the early history of the future Archbishop William, save that he was brought up at Court and especially under the influence of his uncle, Henry of Blois, Bishop of Winchester, a prelate who, though a sound Churchman, was more addicted to political than to ecclesiastical matters. After taking Holy Orders, S. William occupied for a time, under Archbishop Thurstan, the office of Treasurer to the Cathedral of York, a post which won for him a high reputation for liberality in alms-giving, and when, in 1144, the said Archbishop died, after considerable difficulties had already been encountered in filling the vacant See, the choice of the majority of the Chapter fell upon William Fitzherbert.

From this time, until the very close of life, S. William's career was destined to become one long controversy. No sooner was he elected to the See of York than Osbert the Archdeacon brought forward the charge that the royal party had largely influenced the electors, even if they had not actually commanded them as to their selection—a charge which was sufficiently substantiated to render the appointment uncanonical.

S. William, who had already been consecrated by his uncle, the Bishop of Winchester, at once appealed to Rome, but he soon found that he had an unexpected and formidable adversary in the person of S. Bernard,

whose authority in ecclesiastical affairs was at that time almost supreme, and who wrote to the Pope expressing his opinion that S. William's election was most certainly invalid, as was most probably the case. At the same time he charged him with simony and other crimes of which he appears to have been entirely innocent, but which were falsely attributed to him by the Cistercians, who took the part of Henry Murdac, who had always been a most bitter opponent of the new Archbishop, and who, having been trained at Clairvaux under the personal supervision of S. Bernard, was naturally regarded by that Saint as a reliable informant.

At length in 1146, after much controversy, S. William was formally suspended by Pope Eugenius III, and when the See of York, which was thus rendered vacant, was bestowed in 1147 upon Henry Murdac, against whom they were already peculiarly incensed, the partisans of the deposed Archbishop attacked Fountains, and, after plundering what they could, destroyed by fire both the Abbey Church and the monastic buildings, of which nothing escaped save one tiny chapel, where the Abbot, who had successfully eluded their search, knelt in humble prayer.

It was perhaps only natural that such a deed of violence, which, though he had absolutely no part in it, was perpetrated in the interests of S. William, should have been attributed to his influence, notwithstanding the fact that the Saint himself had accepted the papal decree in a very different spirit. Meekly accepting his deposition, he withdrew for a

time to Sicily, whence, returning to England, he took up his abode in the diocese of his uncle, Henry of Blois, where he lived during the next five years (1148–1153) as a recluse in a manor close to Winchester, where it appears that worldly disgrace did much to sanctify what had formerly been rather a harmless than a saintly disposition.

The history of the episcopacy of Henry Murdac at York, during this period, does not concern us here; suffice it to say that in consequence of the bitter opposition of the people, who had learnt to love S. William for his kindly generosity, it was not till 1151 that the new Archbishop, who had at last conquered their resistance by his meekness and forbearance, was at length able to make his formal entry into his Cathedral.

Two years later, in 1153, with dramatic suddenness, everything was changed. The principal opponents of S. William, Eugenius III and S. Bernard, died, within a few months of each other, and, acting on the advice of his friends, S. William, on hearing of the election to the papacy of Anastasius IV, who had always acted as his warm supporter, journeyed once more to Rome to entreat for a fresh consideration of his case. Scarcely had he reached that city when news arrived of the death of Henry Murdac, and S. William returned to England to find that he himself had already been re-elected by the Chapter, and that he was at last free to re-enter his Cathedral City.

The whole city had gone forth to meet him, and clergy and people were vying with one another in their

joyous expressions of welcome, when a wooden bridge, bending beneath the weight of the multitude that thronged it, suddenly collapsed and plunged a vast number of persons into the river that flowed beneath. Greatly distressed at this tragedy, which threatened to overshadow the happiness of his return, the Archbishop, with hands uplifted in intercession, made the sign of the Cross over the drowning multitude. His prayer was answered; not a single life was lost, and it was with still more heartfelt acclamations that S. William re-entered the Cathedral, from whence he had so long been an exile.

But it was not long before the rejoicings of the citizens of York were turned to mourning, since, after celebrating Mass on the Trinity Sunday following his return, S. William was attacked by a severe fever—an illness so sudden that it was at the time, though probably erroneously, attributed to poison—of which, nine days later, he died, on 8 June, 1154, and was buried, amid the sincere lamentations of his people, in his own Cathedral.

S. THOMAS OF CANTERBURY

ARCHBISHOP AND MARTYR *d. December 29th, 1170*

Almost every English child is familiar with the romantic legend of the marriage of S. Thomas à Becket's parents; how his father, Gilbert à Becket, a merchant of Norman extraction, who had made himself a home in Cheapside, whilst a pilgrim, or, as some say, a crusader in the Holy Land, was made a

prisoner and confined in the house of a certain Emir, whose daughter, Roesa or Matilda, as she is more frequently called, fell in love with the handsome European captive and promised to release him. Matilda faithfully fulfilled her promise; but with an ingratitude that is only too common in such cases, Gilbert forgot the deliverer whom he had promised to marry, and, mindful only of his own safety, returned with all possible speed to England. Unable, however, even now to drive her faithless lover from her heart, the Emir's daughter quitted her native land, and by her constant repetition of the word "London" traced him to that city, where she wandered long and patiently among the busy streets, uttering as she went the plaintive cry of "Gilbert! Gilbert!" And after many days, as she chanced to pass along Cheapside, her familiar voice and Eastern attire attracted the attention of the young London merchant, who, touched by her constancy and her devotion, agreed to make her his wife so soon as she had been admitted to Holy Baptism.

Thomas, the only son of this romantic marriage, after receiving a good education from the monks of Merton, entered the service of a certain Richer de l'Aigle of Pevensey Castle, and it was during the years that he spent at Pevensey that an incident occurred which is said to have given him the first bent towards a religious life.

Whilst Becket was one day following his patron on horseback across a narrow foot-bridge, that spanned a rapid mill-stream, his horse stumbled and flung its

youthful rider into the water, where he was rapidly drifting towards the vortex that raged beneath the mill-wheel, and where he must have inevitably been crushed to death, if the miller, utterly unaware of the tragedy in process, had not yielded to some mysterious impulse and stopped the mill.

Whatever effect, however, this narrow escape from death may have had on Becket's moral character, which seems to have been marked by a purity that was rare indeed in that age of licence, it does not appear to have had any special influence on his outward career, since it was only after he had entered the household of Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury, that he was ordained deacon, and this, not with the idea of himself performing any religious duties, but merely as a means whereby he might be lawfully endowed with various wealthy benefices, a comparatively small portion of whose emoluments would suffice to provide a parish-priest, who should act as a substitute for the actual incumbent. To these preferments was soon added the important and lucrative office of Archdeacon of Canterbury.

Even in the Archbishop's palace at Canterbury it would seem that the duties of Thomas à Becket were entirely those of a layman, and when through the influence of that prelate he was appointed Chancellor by the young King, Henry II, he seems still more completely to have sunk the deacon in the statesman.

All the biographers of the period refer to the almost royal state maintained by Thomas the Chancellor, and though some writers suggest the very reasonable

explanation that he was really dispensing not his own hospitality, but that of his royal master, the fact remains that, when Henry was at war with France, his Chancellor supported him with seven hundred knights of his own household, twelve hundred others in his pay, and an army of four thousand footmen, under his personal command, and that when at the conclusion of the war Becket was sent as an Ambassador to France, he travelled with such a magnificent retinue that all beholders were forced to exclaim, " How marvellous must be this King of England, whose Chancellor goeth thus grandly ! "

As Chancellor of the Kingdom and as the confidential minister and friend of Henry II, Becket was well acquainted and apparently completely in harmony with his royal patron's determination to subject the clergy, who at the Conquest had obtained the privilege of trial by their own clerical courts, to that same law of the land which the King was already beginning to make the terror of every rank of lay offender. It was a wise and prudent scheme, and one which in these days we have come to regard as a matter of course ; but in the twelfth century, when each feudal lord had so long administered justice, more or less at his own discretion, to those beneath his sway, it was no wonder that the clergy, who, sad to relate, were often the chief offenders against the law, should cling tenaciously to a very advantageous prerogative, which delivered them from a new form of legislature which they still regarded as experimental, and which, though it promised greater justice than the old regime, was scarcely likely to prove as lenient as their own courts.

It was in the firm confidence that his Chancellor, who had hitherto most sincerely sympathized with his ideals, was the very man to assist him in their fulfilment, that Henry, upon the death of Theobald in 1161, selected the former to succeed him in the metropolitan See of Canterbury.

It was in vain that Becket, who at first almost refused to consider the matter seriously, and who certainly showed no undue eagerness to accept the dignity thus thrust upon him, from the very outset warned his royal patron that, if he should persist in this appointment, the love which he now entertained for the Chancellor would speedily be converted into hatred of the Archbishop; in vain that considerable opposition was offered to what was most certainly not a popular choice on the King's part: Henry steadily refused to be moved from his purpose. On the eve of Whit-Sunday, 1162, Becket was ordained priest by Walter, Bishop of Rochester, and on the Octave of the Festival, the day which he afterwards appointed to be observed as Trinity Sunday, he was consecrated Archbishop by Henry de Blois, Bishop of Winchester.

It was not long before the King and his new Primate came into conflict. "I desire that you provide yourself with another Chancellor, since I find myself scarcely sufficient for the duties of one office, much less of two," such was the laconic message sent by Becket to his late patron, and I think it strikes the key-note of the change in the Archbishop's course of action, and I might add of his character. In whatever sphere of life his lot was cast he was always an enthusiast,

and an enthusiast cannot serve two masters. Hitherto he had loyally served the King to the utmost of his powers; henceforth his energies were to be devoted entirely to the service of the Church and to the defence of what he conceived to be her liberties.

And in his private life the difference between the ecclesiastic and the statesman was no less clearly defined; the Chancellor, though always strictly moral in his personal conduct as well as in the influence he exercised over those around him, had been renowned for his gaiety, his love of display and his lavish expenditure. The Archbishop, it is true, redoubled the magnificent hospitality and the liberal almsgiving of his predecessor, but his former gaiety was exchanged for a dignified and austere demeanour; he fared sparingly at his own sumptuous board; his robes of State concealed the hair shirt and long hours of the night were henceforth spent by him in prayer and in the severest discipline.

Henry at once retaliated upon the Archbishop for his resignation of the Chancellorship by obliging him to resign also the lucrative post of Archdeacon, which he had hitherto retained, but it was not till the following year, 1163, that war was openly declared between the former friends.

In October, 1163, a Council met at Westminster to consider the new propositions of the King, whose present aim was to secure that a clerk proved guilty of crime should be first deprived of his orders and subsequently delivered over to the civil law. To his apparent surprise S. Thomas strenuously opposed

this proposal, and urged his Bishops, who were inclined to yield to Henry's most reasonable demands, to resistance. The most that could be extracted from him was a consent qualified by the phrase "saving the dignity of my Order," which practically invalidated it.

And yet one might almost have expected the King to anticipate some such action from a man who after all was only acting in a manner entirely consistent with his characteristic loyalty; as a Churchman he now considered it his duty to defend those clerical privileges which as a statesman he had been perfectly willing to annul.

The King was furiously angry; the Archbishop in his dilemma appealed to the Pope, Alexander III. The Pope temporized; he condemned the principle of the proposed constitutions, but at the same time he warned Becket not to offend Henry, and under these circumstances the Archbishop was forced to abandon the saving clause with which he had previously safeguarded his acceptance.

A fresh Council was now convened at Clarendon in Wiltshire, where S. Thomas was formally required to set his archiepiscopal seal to what were henceforth known as the Constitutions of Clarendon, but this, to the indignation of Henry, the Archbishop, who had never anticipated that anything beyond a verbal agreement would be required of him, positively refused to do. The King left the Council Chamber in a rage; the Primate left it in bitter shame and repentance for what he now regarded as a temporary

betrayal of his trust, and the Council broke up in confusion.

From this time forward Henry was determined to crush his former favourite, and on 6 October, 1164, he summoned him before a grand Council at Northampton, and there demanded of him an account of the revenues that had passed through his hands as Chancellor.

The Archbishop based his resistance to the authority of the Council on two arguments: the first, that, as his spiritual children, neither law nor reason permitted those assembled to pass judgment on their father; the second, that the charge of corruption was, as was most certainly the case, an utterly unjust one, seeing that, on resigning the office of Chancellor, he had been fully discharged of all secular liabilities.

On the morning of the day when judgment was to be pronounced, S. Thomas celebrated the Mass of S. Stephen, the Protomartyr, at the altar of that Saint in the Church of the Monastery of S. Andrew in Northampton, and then proceeded, crosier in hand, to the castle, to await the decision of the court. All that day, while the Primate, still holding his cross, which afforded him sanctuary, sat silently waiting, the King, in an adjoining apartment, was granting audiences to his lords temporal and spiritual, busily subduing each and all, by threats or by persuasion, into submission to his will; till at length it was almost unanimously decreed that, since the Archbishop had refused to abide trial in the King's court, he must expiate his contumacy with imprisonment.

The Bishops then filed solemnly into the judgment hall and took their seats facing the Archbishop; the barons followed, and the Earl of Leicester, who had been deputed to act as spokesman, proceeded to pronounce the sentence. But no sooner had he referred, in his opening speech, to the royal benefits which Becket had repaid with such ingratitude, than the Archbishop interrupted him, and after repeating his former objections to the trial to which he had been subjected, charging the Earl under pain of anathema to hold his peace, rose with dignity to his feet, and after appealing to the Pope as his only competent judge, and still bearing his crosier, moved slowly towards the great door of the hall, which is said to have opened to him of its own accord, and so passed from the jeers and mockery of his opponents to the joyous acclamations of the crowd, who regarded him as their champion.

That night, from the Church of the Monastery of S. Andrew, where he had elected to spend the night, S. Thomas of Canterbury secretly fled from Northampton to the Gilbertine Priory of Haverholme in Lincolnshire, and thence, across the fens, by way of his manor of Eastrey, to Sandwich, whence he sailed to the port of S. Omer, and there found a refuge in the Cistercian Monastery.

It is impossible, in such limited space, to enter into all the details of S. Thomas' exile in France, where he procured for himself the patronage of Louis VII, and where, after an interview with the Pope at Sens, from which he derived but little satisfaction, the

Cistercian Monastery of Pontigny was allotted him as a residence. Here he assumed the monastic habit, and here he sought to imitate the other monks in the coarseness of their food, in their manual labour, and in their discipline, with such enthusiasm as to bring upon himself a severe illness, after which it was earnestly enjoined upon him to mitigate his austerities. Two years later, in order to relieve the community of the persecution they must have incurred through his presence, he removed to the Monastery of S. Columba at Sens.

During the six years that S. Thomas spent in France, three meetings were arranged, through the mediation of Louis of France, between the exiled Primate and Henry II, who, it must be mentioned, had tyrannically plundered all the Archbishop's friends and supporters to the number of about four hundred, and finally banished them from the country; but it was not till the third meeting, held at Freteval, on 22 July, 1170, that a reconciliation was effected, and it must certainly be admitted that it was the Prelate who in each case showed less disposition to forgive than did the King.

It was on 1 December, 1170, four months after this meeting of reconciliation, which had been succeeded by others of a friendly character, that Becket once more landed in England, amid the wild enthusiasm of the populace, who greeted him with the ecstatic cry: "Blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord!" On the following day he made what amounted to a royal progress to his cathedral city of Canterbury.

But the reconciliation with the King was destined to be of no long duration, for the Archbishop had sent before him to England a sentence of excommunication against the Archbishop of York, who had officiated at the coronation of the young King Henry, and against the Bishops of London and Salisbury, who had usurped his episcopal rights during his absence. The excommunicated prelates fled to the King, who was then holding his Court in the neighbourhood of Bayeux, and declaring the Archbishop to be guilty of inciting the King's subjects to rebellion, appealed to him for protection.

" My lord, while Thomas lives, you will neither have peace or quiet in your kingdom ! " said a voice from among the attendant councillors.

And in reply, falling suddenly into one of those paroxysms of rage to which he was so unfortunately subject, Henry gave vent to the passionate exclamation that was destined to have such fatal results.

" Have I nourished such miserable sluggards in my kingdom, that there is none that will rid me of this insolent priest ! "

We may fairly acquit the King of any real intention to incite the murder of his former friend, but at these words, silently and unperceived, four knights, Reginald Fitzurse, William de Tracy, Hugh de Morville and Richard Brito, stole quietly from the hall and crossed at once to England.

Two days later, on 29 December, the Archbishop, who had already been warned of their approach, was seated in his private apartment with certain of

his intimate friends, when these four knights sought admission to his presence, and after bidding him, in the King's name, reinstate the Bishops he had excommunicated, accused him openly of charging the King with treachery, by claiming that Henry had himself approved the excommunication of the Archbishop of York for officiating, in accordance with his own royal bidding, at the coronation of his son.

"This is the King's command," concluded the four knights, "that you depart with all your men from the kingdom and from the land which lies under his sway, since from this day there can be no peace with you or yours, seeing that you have broken the peace."

"Let your threat cease, and let your wranglings be stilled," retaliated the incensed Archbishop. "I trust in the King of Heaven, Who for His own hath suffered on the Cross; from this day none shall behold the sea betwixt me and my Church. Are ye come to kill me?" he continued boldly. "I have committed my cause to the great Judge of all; and you will find me foot to foot in the battle of the Lord."

Infuriated at the bold front presented by the Archbishop, who, if he had once fled in fear from Northampton, was now prepared to conquer or to die, the knights rushed headlong from his presence to seek their weapons, whilst the few faithful attendants of the Primate urged upon him the necessity of flight, and failing to persuade him by their words, actually pushed and dragged him along with them towards the sanctuary of the Cathedral.

They had barely reached the door of the north

transept, and were trying to persuade the Archbishop to seek refuge in the dark recesses of the crypt, where the gathering twilight would have rendered him comparatively safe from his pursuers, when heavy blows were heard without, followed by the angry voices of the King's men, who had forced an entrance through an orchard into the cloisters.

"Where is Thomas à Becket, traitor to the King and realm?" they demanded insolently; then, finding that no reply was vouchsafed to this first question, "Where is the Archbishop?"

"Here am I," answered a clear, firm voice, "no traitor, but a priest of God, and ready to suffer in His Name, Who hath redeemed me by His Blood."

And so saying S. Thomas turned to the right, beside the altar of S. Benedict, where, bending his head and folding his hands as if in prayer, he awaited the onset of his assailants.

One final offer of life seems to have been made him by the four knights, who, at the last, were apparently ashamed to strike a defenceless man, whose followers, with the exception of one faithful priest, had all forsaken him, and they would probably have been content to make him a prisoner, if he would have consented, even at the last moment, to absolve the excommunicated Bishops.

"Never, till they have offered satisfaction!" was the firm and unwavering reply.

"Then die!" exclaimed Fitzurse, and Tracy, who afterwards boasted of the deed, dealt the first murderous blow, which was quickly followed by

others from his companions, till in a few moments, uttering in faint and almost unintelligible tones his last commendatory prayer, the martyred Saint fell, mortally wounded, to the ground.

S. EDMUND RICH

ARCHBISHOP *d. November 16th, 1242*

Tradition tells us that S. Edmund Rich, who was born at Abingdon towards the close of the twelfth century, of religious parents of the merchant class, displayed at his birth such an entire absence of vitality that, after lying apparently lifeless from morning till evening, the order had already been given for his burial, when his mother, Mabel, intervened and requested that he should first be baptized, which was no sooner done than the infant evinced manifest signs of life.

The eldest of a family of six, four sons and two daughters, the boy appears to have received from his mother, whose object in life was to qualify her first-born son for canonization, an education of enforced piety and ascetism, which would certainly have converted the average boy into a weakling or a prig.

The youthful Edmund, however, perhaps because he really did possess a saintly disposition, appears to have risen superior to her injudicious though well-meant training, and to have passed with distinction through the years of his education at a school in Oxford and afterwards at the University of Paris,

to which both he and his brother Robert were sent, each carrying with him, as he begged his way thither, amongst his scanty outfit, a hair shirt, which he was bidden to wear at least three times a week.

From Paris, Edmund was recalled to England, on account of the death of his mother (his father appears to have died some years earlier, as a monk of Evesham), and it consequently became his duty to provide for the future of his sisters, whom, however, their mother had already destined for the cloister. But though the mother had bequeathed money with which to purchase the admission of the two girls into some respected community, their brother regarded this manner of procuring the right of entry into a convent as a species of simony, and preferred to scour the neighbourhood till he should find an Abbess who would accept his sisters on their own merits ; and it was only after various fruitless attempts that the young man presented himself at the gates of the Convent of Catesby, where, so the legend declares, the Prioress came forth to meet him and begged to be allowed to receive the two maidens into her community.

After a year of mourning for his mother, spent at the Monastery of Merton in Surrey, Edmund returned to Oxford, where he laboured hard to restore the University to its former prestige, and where he soon became a most popular teacher, distinguished alike for " his learning, his asceticism and his self-denying charity."

But before long the young scholar's conscience

began to smite him, on account of the time that he was thus devoting to profane learning; and this remorse seems to have been accentuated by a vision in which his mother appeared to him, and after pointing in rebuke towards the mathematical diagrams by which her son was surrounded, seized his right hand and described thereon three circles, on each of which she wrote the name of one Person of the Blessed Trinity. From this time forward he devoted himself solely to the study and teaching of theology, and so soon as he could accomplish it, presented himself to receive Holy Orders.

As Priest and Doctor of Divinity, S. Edmund received many offers of preferment, all of which he rejected, until, about the year 1220, in answer to an appeal from Richard Poor, Bishop of Salisbury, for men of private means, whose incomes would enable them to defray the expenses of hospitality which naturally devolved on all who held office in a Cathedral Church, so that he might thus, with the money saved from their stipends, repay the contribution of the Dean and Chapter towards the debt on his new Minster, he accepted the post of Treasurer at Salisbury Cathedral, a post to which was attached the benefice of Calne in Wiltshire, and here his liberal almsgiving, while it endeared him to rich and poor alike, often reduced him to the necessity of seeking the hospitality of others. It was perhaps fortunate for his future career that during this period his friend and neighbour, Stephen of Lexington, Abbot of Stanley in Wiltshire, and afterwards Abbot of Clairvaulx, managed to

impress upon him the duty of greater prudence in the administration of his personal affairs.

In the year 1227, when the Sixth Crusade was being enthusiastically preached in England, we find that though S. Edmund did not feel called upon to assume the Cross in person, after the example of the Bishops of Exeter and of Winchester, he was busily engaged in preaching at his own expense in Berkshire, Oxford, Gloucestershire and Worcestershire, urging his hearers, if they could not themselves become Crusaders, at least to contribute liberally towards the expenses of the holy enterprise.

But upon the death of Richard Grant, Archbishop of Canterbury, in 1234, Edmund Rich, who was then residing in the peaceful seclusion of his benefice of Calne, found himself appointed, to his dismay, at a most critical moment in the history of the Church of England, to the vacant See, at the suggestion of Pope Gregory IX, who had rejected the three former nominees of the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury.

To explain further events, it may here be necessary to refer briefly to the condition of affairs within the kingdom. From the date of his accession to the throne Henry III had been constantly under the influence of some stronger personality than himself, the two principal rivals for his favour being Hubert de Burgh, the justiciary of the kingdom, who, though he was unpopular among the nobles, was a prime favourite with most of the national party, and Peter des Roches, Bishop of Winchester, who, as a Poitevin

by birth, represented the encroaching power in England of the Papacy and of the foreigner.

For eight years Hubert de Burgh had retained the ascendancy over the King, but when, in the year 1232, he saw his adversary reappear at Court, he must have been fully prepared for the fate that speedily befell him—disgrace, enforced flight and subsequent captivity—which, even after he had successfully effected his escape, left him entirely cured of any further aspirations towards the office of chief minister of the Crown.

No sooner had Des Roches regained the ascendancy, than the English Court was once more thronged with Poitevins, Gascons, Provençals, Italians and Savoyards, whilst the foreign Bishop safeguarded his own position by sowing dissension amongst the English nobles; and during the plentiful fighting that ensued, the Earl Marshal, Richard, Earl of Pembroke, the leader of the National party, who had been driven into an alliance with the disaffected Welsh, was basely enticed to Ireland by the agents of Des Roches, presumably by letters bearing the royal seal, and mortally wounded in battle.

It was at this moment that Edmund Rich was called to the See of Canterbury, and though he had hitherto taken no active part in political affairs, not many days had elapsed since his Consecration before he openly addressed Henry in the following very plain language:

"My lord and King," he said, "we tell you, as your faithful subjects, that the counsel that you are now

following is neither salutary nor safe, but displeasing to God, contrary to the sacred law, and charged with danger to yourself and to this realm of England; we refer to the counsel of Peter, Bishop of Winchester, and of Peter de Rievaulx (nominally the nephew of the Bishop) and of their accomplices." And he threatened, unless the King were willing to amend his ways, that he would at once excommunicate these and all other disturbers of the peace and concord of the realm.

The King, for the time being, meekly submitted to episcopal authority; Peter des Roches was dismissed from Court, as was also his nephew, Peter de Rievaulx, whilst the Poitevin mercenaries, whom the King had introduced by their advice, were sent back to their native country.

But in the year 1236 Henry's marriage with Eleanor of Provence, besides involving the King in heavy expenses, introduced a yet larger swarm of foreigners at Court, and the banished favourites found themselves speedily reinstated in the royal favour.

It was perhaps because S. Edmund had not proved himself as amenable to the royal will as the King had hoped, that in the year 1237 the latter requested and received from Rome a Legate, in the person of Otho, Cardinal of S. Nicholas in Carcere Tulliano, who should reside in England and act as Henry's adviser. His arrival came as an unexpected blow both to the National party and to the Archbishop, and during the four years that he remained in England, vast sums of money were exacted on one pretext or another,

which undoubtedly found their way into the coffers of the Pope.

But that which most aggravated the already strained relations between the King and Primate was the marriage of Eleanor, Henry's sister, and the widow of the Earl Marshal, Richard, Earl of Pembroke, with Simon de Montfort, after the Countess in the first bitterness of her grief had, by the advice of S. Edmund, received the veil at his hands. The Archbishop vehemently opposed the marriage. The Legate, as a matter of course, opposed the Archbishop, and his suggestion that, though a dispensation would certainly have been better procured before the marriage, it might yet, on the payment of high fees, be obtained in order to obviate future complications, came as a considerable relief to the Court, which had found itself in a somewhat difficult situation, and it was the foreigner, be it observed, who had afforded this relief.

From this time forward, slight upon slight was cast upon the unhappy Primate. His monks, amongst whom he would fain have re-established the rigid discipline of former days, appealed to Rome against his decrees. He journeyed to Rome, hoping to effect a better understanding with the Pope, and to be thus enabled to enforce his authority, only to meet there with studied insults, and to obtain a contrary judgment in every case that he brought before the Roman Curia. He returned to England; in June, 1230, an infant prince was born, the heir to the throne, whom it was the obvious privilege of the Primate of all England to baptize, but it was the Legate, Otho,

who was invited to perform the ceremony, and meek and gentle though he was by nature, S. Edmund could not but resent so gross an insult to his high office in the Church.

Convinced that his political influence was at an end, the Archbishop set himself, with the aid of S. Richard of Chichester, to redress a crying evil in the Church, where, since the revenues of all vacant Sees reverted to the Crown, it was to the King's interest to prolong each vacancy as long as possible. The remedy suggested by the two prelates was that after a vacancy of six months the nomination of the new Bishop should lapse to the Archbishop—a decision which was highly displeasing to Henry, and which, through the mediation of the Legate, received the condemnation of the Pope.

But the climax came in the year 1240, when a papal brief was issued which commanded the Archbishop of Canterbury, as also the Bishops of Lincoln and of Salisbury, to provide benefices for three hundred Italian clerics before any preferment was granted to a single Englishman. Trouble and anxiety had undermined S. Edmund's health; and he felt that he was no longer of any service to the Church in his present office. Possibly a stronger man might have remained at his post and struggled to retrieve the losses he had incurred, but the Archbishop was too broken both in mind and spirit to carry on the contest.

He bade farewell to the King and journeyed to Pontigny, hoping perhaps that his retirement might effect what his presence had failed to do, and that he

might yet be recalled to champion the cause he loved. If so, his hopes were doomed to prove fallacious; and the few remaining months of his life were spent, under the habit of a simple monk, in meditation, in the most austere discipline and in constant prayer for the deliverance of the country that he loved, but which seemed to have no further need of him.

When the summer came, the infirmities from which the afflicted Archbishop already suffered appear to have been increased by the heat of Pontigny, and the physicians earnestly recommended a complete change of air. It was with reluctance that S. Edmund obeyed their commands, and removed to the Priory of Soissy, near Provins; it was with reluctance also that the monks of Pontigny suffered him to depart, for during his short sojourn amongst them they had learnt to love him both for his sanctity and his humility.

"I will return to you on the Feast of S. Edmund the King!" he said to them in parting; and it was in very deed on the festival of that royal Martyr, 20 November, that S. Edmund, the Archbishop, was carried back to Pontigny—a corpse.

S. RICHARD DE WYCH

BISHOP *d. April 3rd, 1253*

The second son of wealthy parents, who resided in the little village of Wyche, in Worcestershire, from which the Saint takes his name, S. Richard and his brother were early left orphans, while the estate, during the minority of the heir, was left to the care of guardians.

The inclinations of the younger son, Richard, seem from his earliest childhood to have tended towards a life of study, but when, on his brother's coming of age, the property was discovered to have been so shamefully mismanaged that the latter was reduced almost to a state of beggary, Richard, who, although the younger, was evidently the stronger character of the two, cheerfully abandoned his scholarly pursuits, to rally to his brother's assistance, and toiled for him both as steward and even as a manual labourer, with such discretion and devotion, that the family fortunes were soon in a fair way to be retrieved.

The elder brother, in his gratitude for Richard's noble exertions, appears to have contemplated making the latter his heir, but it was not long before Richard, perceiving that his brother was already repenting him of his generosity, resolved to relieve him of all further responsibility towards himself, and betook himself with two companions to the University of Oxford, where the three lived in such poverty that, having only one gown between them, they were obliged to take it in turn to attend lectures.

When S. Richard was one day present at a great feast, given by one of the professors, a message was brought him that a fair youth on horseback, who refused to give his name, was eagerly desirous to speak with him. The young student, wondering no doubt what this urgent message should mean, at once rose from his seat and went to the door, only to find on reaching it that the mysterious stranger had completely disappeared. When he returned to the hall,

however, he found that during his absence a huge stone had fallen from the wall, with terrific force, on to the very spot where, but for the summons of one whom he naturally thenceforth regarded as an angelic messenger, he would himself have been seated.

On leaving Oxford, S. Richard studied first in Paris, and later, for a period of seven years, at the University of Bologna, where he obtained so high a reputation in Canon Law, which he there made his principal subject, that on his return to England he was elected Chancellor of Oxford and afterwards, in the year 1135, was appointed by S. Edmund Rich to be Chancellor of the Diocese of Canterbury, in which office he devotedly served his beloved patron in all his troubles, and finally followed him into exile at Pontigny.

On the death of S. Edmund, in the year 1242, S. Richard abandoned Pontigny and entered the Dominican Convent at Orleans, where after devoting himself for some time to the study of divinity, he was subsequently ordained priest, and whence, returning to England, he entered upon the humble duties of a curate in the neighbourhood of Canterbury—duties which he would willingly have continued, if the new Archbishop, Boniface, had not insisted on his resuming the office that he had held under his great predecessor.

When, however, in the year 1244, on the death of Ralph Neville, Bishop of Chichester, Henry III at once proceeded to bestow the vacant See upon one Robert Passelew, a Court favourite, who was notoriously unworthy to succeed to so sacred an office,

the Archbishop declaring the King's appointment to be null and void, owing to the manifest ignorance of the Bishop-elect in all theological matters, appointed, in his place, his own Chancellor, Richard Wych. The King, as was to be expected, was furiously angry at this opposition to his royal will, and when S. Richard, after his Consecration in 1245, reached Chichester, it was to find that Henry had confiscated all the revenues of his diocese, and that the doors of his Cathedral were closed against him by the royal command.

For two years S. Richard meekly resigned himself to the persecution to which he was thus subjected, residing the while in the house of a poor parish priest, in the village of Ferring on the Sussex coast, busying himself with such episcopal duties as it was still in his power to perform, till at the close of that period, the King, yielding to the threat of an interdict, restored to him the temporalities and rights of his See of Chichester (June, 1247).

The charity, the liberality, the impartial justice meted out to rich and poor alike, the severity that was exercised towards himself alone, naturally won for S. Richard the love and esteem of all those with whom he came in contact, but it was still more assuredly the spirit in which he met the terrible famine, that occurred during the days of his episcopacy, that especially endeared him to the flock entrusted to his care.

S. Richard was seated at dinner when news was brought him that the funds of the diocese had proved utterly unable to cope with the needs of the starving

multitude that thronged his palace gates, and it was without a moment's hesitation that the good Bishop bade his servants sell the valuable plate that adorned his table, "for, thank God!" he added, "I can eat out of ordinary platters, as my father did before me, and drink out of a common cup. Surely it is not meet that we should eat and drink out of gold and silver, whilst Christ is suffering hunger in the persons of His poor. Sell my horse also, and let the price be employed in succouring the poorer members of Jesus Christ."

But these happy relations between a saintly Prelate and his devoted people were destined to be of no long duration. Only a few years had elapsed since his entry into the full rights of his episcopate when S. Richard was commissioned by the Pope to undertake a preaching mission throughout the south of England. Beginning with his own city of Chichester, the Saint proceeded along the coast to Canterbury, but before he had reached Dover, his health, already impaired by the severity of his labours, finally gave way, and though he struggled bravely on till he reached that town, he reached it only to die there.

It is said that one day, during this last illness, when S. Richard was exhorted by his faithful attendant to partake heartily of the solitary dish that the Lenten fare permitted, in the hope of maintaining his strength, the Saint, whose thoughts were now inalienably fixed upon the future life, replied quietly: "It is enough; one dish alone is needed for that Supper." Then, noticing the puzzled expression on the servant's face, he added gently: "Knowest thou what I mean? I

refer to that which S. Philip said to our Lord : ' Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us.' May the Lord grant me that one thing ! "

He died on 3 April, 1253, and was buried, by his own request, before the altar of S. Edmund, the saintly Archbishop whom he had served so loyally, in his own Cathedral Church at Chichester.

CHAPTER IV

MISSIONARY SAINTS

"We grudge not our Life, if it give larger
Life unto them that do live."

S. EWALD THE BLACK AND S. EWALD THE FAIR

PRIESTS AND MARTYRS *d. October 5th, c.* 695

NOT long after S. Willibrod and his companions had commenced their missionary labours in Friesland, two English priests, who had both sojourned long in Ireland, reached Westphalia, where they intended to preach the Gospel to the neighbouring heathen. Both alike bore the name of Ewald, but for the sake of distinction the one, who also excelled the more in his knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, was surnamed, owing to the colour of his hair, "the Black," while his companion, who, if he was inferior to the other in knowledge, was in no wise second to him in zeal, was for the same cause called "the Fair."

On their arrival in Westphalia the two missionaries took up their abode with a certain steward, whom they entreated to commend them to the lord of that district, for whom, they said, they brought tidings that would prove to his advantage.

But during the days that must needs elapse before the steward could find opportunity to conduct them to his lord, their diligent attention to the various

rites of their religion aroused the suspicions of the Old Saxon idolaters, who, jealous of their faith, and fearing lest their lord should call upon them to renounce their ancient worship, fell upon the two priests, and after slaying Ewald the Black with the sword, proceeded to subject Ewald the Fair to long and excruciating torture.

The bodies of the two Martyrs were cast by the Saxons into the Rhine, where, so the legend relates, their remains, guarded by night by a pillar of fire, reaching from earth to Heaven, were miraculously borne against the stream to a spot adjoining the settlement of some of their fellow-missionaries. Here, when the river had thus carried its precious burden into safety, one of the Martyrs appeared by night to one Tilmon, an English soldier of noble birth, who had abandoned his profession to become a monk and a missionary, and directed him to follow the guidance of the mysterious light to the spot where their bodies lay, and to afford them honourable burial.

Not long afterwards, however, when tidings of their death reached the ears of Pepin of Heristal, the latter at once sent to fetch the relics of the martyred SS. Ewald, and translated them with due honour to the Church of S. Cunibert at Cologne.

S. EGBERT

PRESBYTER AND MISSIONARY IN WILL, THOUGH NOT IN DEED — *d. April 24th, 729*

It was in the year 664 that the great pestilence, which was working such terrible havoc in England,

spread to Ireland and visited a certain monastery in Connaught, to which two young Englishmen of noble birth, Ædilhun and Egbert by name, who had come thither from the monastery of Lindisfarne, had attached themselves, and after killing or dispersing a considerable number of the community, brought both these young men also to the point of death.

In the firm belief that his last hour was near at hand, Egbert one morning crawled from his cell, and, seating himself on the grass outside, began to meditate upon his past life, till, overcome with compunction for the many sins which passed in gloomy array before the tribunal of his own conscience, he implored that time might be vouchsafed him to repent him more fully of his misdeeds, and vowed that if his prayer were granted he would never return to his native country, but would thenceforth devote himself entirely to good works and to the most rigid discipline.

Re-entering his cell, the young monk then laid himself down to sleep, but it was not long before his companion, awaking him, addressed him in the following words: "O Brother Egbert, what hast thou done? I had hoped that we might enter together into life eternal. Rest assured, however, that thou shalt receive that for which thou hast prayed."

The next night Ædilhun died, while Egbert recovered, and lived till the year 729, when he died a priest at the age of ninety.

Years after the above event, an appeal reached

our shores for missionaries, who should convert the heathen barbarians of Germany and the Netherlands to the Faith of Christ, and Egbert was one of the foremost to offer himself for the work, and he had already selected his companions and made all the arrangements for their journey, when he was divinely instructed that the task allotted to his share was not after all that to which his inclination would have led him.

Early one morning, so the legend runs, Egbert was visited by a certain monk, formerly a disciple of Prior Boisil at Melrose, who related to him, in the following manner, a vision which he had that night beheld: "The matins hymn was ended, and I had already stretched my limbs upon my pallet, and a light sleep had stolen over me, when there appeared to me my former master, Boisil, who inquired of me whether I recognized him. 'Yes, you are Boisil,' I replied, whereupon he continued thus: 'I am come to bring a message from our Lord and Saviour to Egbert, which must nevertheless be delivered to him by you. Tell him, therefore, that he may not accomplish the voyage which he has purposed, since it is the will of God that he should go rather to instruct the monasteries of Columba.'"

When Egbert had heard the message, he besought the brother to repeat it to no other person, lest perchance it should prove illusory, while, though he himself greatly feared that it was true, he continued as before to complete his preparations for his journey.

But a few days later the same monk returned to him on a similar errand. "Why were you so negligent

and cold in the manner wherein you delivered to Egbert the message that I delivered to you?" Boisil had asked of him during the past night. "Go to him again, and tell him that whether he will or no, he must needs visit the monasteries of Columba, because their ploughs do not run straight, and it is for him to bring them back into the right furrow."

But Egbert still refused to submit his will to Divine guidance, and having now completed his preparations, he placed everything on board and was only waiting for a favourable wind to set sail for Friesland, on whose shores S. Wilfrid had been driven by stress of weather some few years earlier. But instead of the fair breeze that he hoped for, there arose a terrific tempest, which destroyed all the cargo of the vessel, save only those things which belonged to Egbert and his companions, and which finally cast the ship high and dry upon the shore.

Then at last, realizing that it was for his sake that the storm had arisen, Egbert abandoned all thought of participating in person in the missionary labours on which his heart was set, and began to collect yet other men, and notably S. Willibrod, who set forth about the year 690, to preach the Gospel in the Netherlands.

It was not till the year 716 that Egbert at length started on his mission to the monks of Iona, where "because he was a most delightful teacher and a most devout practiser of those things which he taught should be done, he was most willingly heard by all, and by his pious and assiduous exhortations prevailed

to change that inveterate tradition of their forefathers, in regard to whom we may quote that saying of the Apostle, 'that they had a zeal, but not according to knowledge'—teaching them to keep the Queen of Festivals after the Catholic and Apostolic custom, under the figure of a perpetual cycle."

Strangely enough, it was on Easter Day, 729, a year in which, thanks to his efforts, the great Festival was for the first time observed at Iona, on 24 April, that the aged Presbyter who had spent the last thirteen years at the Monastery of S. Columba, and who had himself on this final day of his mortal existence celebrated the Divine Mysteries, brought to a close a life conspicuous for its perfection of humility, meekness and simplicity.

S. WILLIBROD

MISSIONARY BISHOP *d. November 7th, 739*

Predestined, as it were, to a life of sanctity, by the crescent which declared to his mother, shortly before his birth, in the year 658, the missionary fame to which her son should in later life attain, S. Willibrod, who was of Northumbrian birth, retired while scarcely seven years of age to the monastery of Ripon, and there, while still little more than a boy, made his profession.

Almost before he had reached the age of twenty he retired, as many of his contemporaries appear to have done, for the sake of further religious training, to Ireland, where, twelve years later, he found himself confronted by his vocation in life, when Egbert

the Priest, a missionary in will, who, as has already been recorded in his legend, was divinely hindered from becoming one in deed, selected him as one of the twelve whom he purposed to send to Friesland as his substitutes.

Landing safely at the mouth of the Rhine, S. Willibrod and his companions were cordially welcomed by Pepin of Heristal, who having just defeated Radbod, the heathen king of that district, and compelled him to surrender a considerable portion of his Frisian dominions, was earnestly desirous of the conversion to Christianity of their inhabitants, which had hitherto been strenuously opposed by Radbod. It was with this object, therefore, that he established S. Willibrod and his companions at Wilteburg, where they laboured with much success among the Frankish Frisians.

In the year 696, S. Willibrod was consecrated Bishop of the Frisians at Rome, but grudging every hour that detained him from his missionary labours, he returned with all possible speed to Friesland, and fixed his episcopal See at Utrecht.

Shortly after the baptism of the infant son of Charles Martel, the bastard heir of Pepin of Heristal, on which occasion the Bishop prophetically foretold that the child, Pepin the Short, should exceed in glory all his forefathers—a prediction verified when he was afterwards crowned King of the Franks—Pepin of Heristal died, in the year 714, and was succeeded as Mayor of the Palace by Charles Martel, in whose time the subjugation of Friesland was still further completed.

But it must not be supposed that Willibrod confined his labours to the Frankish portion of Friesland only, for besides attempting, though without success, the conversion of Radbod and his subjects, he even penetrated as far as the Danish coast, and brought back with him thence thirty Danish youths, whom he purposed to educate in the Faith. It was on his return from Denmark that the Bishop and his companions were cast upon the shores of Heligoland, which still remained under the jurisdiction of King Radbod. Now on this island, which was sacred to one of the Frisian deities, it was strictly forbidden, under penalty of incurring the wrath of the heathen gods, either to slay an animal or to drink, except in solemn silence, from a certain holy well. S. Willibrod, therefore, anxious to prove to the inhabitants the futility of these vain superstitions, killed certain of their cattle, in order to provide food for his company, and afterwards baptized three of his converts in the holy well. The heathen waited awhile, expecting to witness some sudden vengeance of the gods befall these violators of their rites, but seeing that nothing happened, they at length sent to inform King Radbod of this act of desecration. Filled with indignation at the presumption of these shipwrecked strangers, the King ordered that lots should be cast, and that the delinquent on whom the lot should fall should instantly be put to death, and thus it happened that one of the newly baptized Danes died a martyr to the heathen superstition of these islanders.

It is also related of S. Willibrod that when, on

another occasion, on his arrival in a village in Walcheren, where sacrifices were about to be offered to a famous image of Woden, the Bishop in his zeal broke down and shattered the revered idol, whereupon the priest, indignant at this act of desecration, struck the Saint on the head with his sword, the latter received no smallest injury, although, seemingly, as if the blow had recoiled upon his misguided assailant, the latter, within three days, lost first his senses and afterwards his life.

After fifty years of devoted labour in the diocese of Utrecht, S. Willibrod, in a good old age, having appointed for himself a successor, withdrew to the seclusion of the Monastery of Epternac in Luxemburg, which he had himself founded, and where he died at the age of eighty-one, on 7 November, 739.

King Radbod has been so frequently mentioned in connection with the missionaries to Friesland, that although the following incident does not actually concern S. Willibrod, it seems that it would not be amiss to insert it in this place.

At last the fierce old warrior, influenced by the teaching of Wulfram, Bishop of Sens, had consented to renounce his idolatry and to present himself as a candidate for Holy Baptism. At the last moment, however, it occurred to the aged King to inquire of the Bishop as to the present state of his ancestors. "They are without doubt in Hell, together with all other unbelievers," replied Bishop Wulfram sternly, and as we may hope with somewhat too sweeping an assurance.

"Then will I rather feast with them, who are

kings and warriors, in the halls of Woden, than dwell in Heaven with your troop of Christian beggars."

And so the aged Radbod died, as he had lived, a heathen.

S. BONIFACE

APOSTLE AND MARTYR *d. June 5th, 755*

When many a man flocked to S. Cuthbert's school at Carlisle, propounded his doubts, confessed his sins and won for himself absolution,

"among the rest,
A little seven years' boy, with sweet, still face,
Yet strong not less and sage, drew softly near,
His great calm eyes upon the patriarch fixed,
And silent stood. From Wessex came that boy:
By chance Northumbria's guest. Meantime a chief
Demanded thus: 'Of all the works of might
What task is worthiest?' Cuthbert made reply:
'His who to land barbaric fearless fares
And open flings God's palace gate to all,
And cries, "Come in!"' That concourse thrilled for joy:
Alone that seven years' child retained the word:
The rest forgat it. 'Winifrede' that day
Men called him: later centuries 'Boniface.'
Because he shunned the ill and wrought the good;
In time the Teuton warriors knew that brow—
Their great Apostle he: they knew that voice:
And happy Fulda venerates this day
Her martyr's gravestone."

So runs the legendary tale of S. Boniface's first call to the missionary life, as it is told us in the *Saxon Saints* of Mr. Aubrey de Vere, and even if we must reluctantly acknowledge that the name of S. Cuthbert

is probably erroneously inserted, the remainder gives us a beautiful account of what may actually have occurred when Winfrid, still a child, at Crediton in Devonshire, first came under the influence of certain preaching monks who visited his father's home.

It seems to have been only after a grievous sickness, which he recognized as a judgment sent from God, in consequence of his resistance against his son's manifest vocation, that the father allowed Winfrid to enter the Benedictine Monastery of Nutsall near Winchester, there to receive the training necessary for his future career. Here, at the age of thirty, Winfrid was ordained priest, and it was apparently in the year 715, when he was about thirty-five years of age, that the young missionary set sail with two or three fellow-monks for Friesland, on an expedition which proved fruitless owing to the war that was then waging between Charles Martel and the heathen King Radbod.

It was not long, however, before Winfrid resolved upon a second missionary attempt, this time in Thuringia, where, after visiting Rome to receive the papal blessing, he achieved considerable success, until, in 719, hearing of the death of his former adversary, Radbod, he returned once more to Friesland, where Charles Martel was now the sole ruler, and where Winfrid laboured for the three following years in company with Willibrod, Archbishop of Utrecht.

In 723 Winfrid visited Rome a second time, and was there consecrated a "regionary" Bishop by Pope

Gregory II, who at the same time exacted from him an oath of obedience to the Papal See and changed his name from Winfrid to Boniface.

On his return from Rome, Boniface, as we must now call him, returned to Hesse, where he deliberately carried the war into the camp of heathenism, by cutting down, with his own hands, Thor's oak at Geismar, which had been the object of veneration of generations upon generations of the pagan inhabitants, or, as another version gives it, by threatening to fell the tree, which, while the idolators were preparing to resist him, split of its own accord, to the profound astonishment of the spectators, into four parts, whereupon the heathen multitude instantly exchanged the worship of their heathen deities for Christianity.

From this time forward Christianity seems to have advanced in Germany with rapid strides, and S. Boniface soon found himself obliged to summon to his aid from England, and more especially from Wessex, a considerable band of monks, as also a party of nuns from the convent of Wimborne, amongst whom were S. Lioba, S. Theckla and S. Walburga, whilst at about the same time he procured from Rome the assistance of two young Anglo-Saxon monks of royal descent, S. Willibald and S. Winibald.

But the influence of S. Boniface was not felt only amongst the humbler converts to the Faith; he was also the valued friend of Pepin of Heristal, of Charles Martel, of Carloman and also of Pepin the Short, whom, in the year 751, he consecrated at Soissons as first King of the Franks—friendships that were of

immense value to him in his labours, since they enabled Church and State to work in complete harmony with one another.

Already in the year 731, in recognition of his devoted zeal, Boniface was made an Archbishop, though still without a See—a lack which was supplied considerably later (745) by his appointment as Primate of Mainz. It was in the previous year, 744, that, in addition to the many churches and religious houses that he had already founded and over which he had established Bishops and clergy, Abbots and Abbesses, he commenced, amid the forests of Bavaria, the erection of the famous monastery of Fulda, with which his name is so closely connected, and which became later the principal Benedictine Community in Germany.

At length, in the year 752, feeling that, owing to the weight of increasing years, his days on earth were numbered, S. Boniface resigned his Archbishopric into the hands of Lullus, one of his faithful band of English missionaries, whom he had hitherto retained with him as his inseparable companion, but it was a resignation that was in no way suggested by the wish for any mitigation in the severity of his labours. It was on the contrary the desire to preach once more amongst the Frisians, who had been his earliest converts, that led the venerable Archbishop from his German home, whence, taking with him some fifty of his monks and clergy, he started on what was to prove his last apostolic mission.

Following the course of the Rhine, the little party met at first with unopposed success; and on 5 June,

755, they halted beside a little river in the heart of Friesland, where S. Boniface had arranged to confirm a large number of his new converts. Instead, however, of the band of neophytes whom the good Prelate was awaiting on the river-bank, his little company was suddenly surprised by a vast host of heathen warriors, who, as they approached, savagely brandishing their weapons, swore that they were come to avenge the insults offered to their national gods. The younger missionaries at first eagerly offered themselves to fight in the defence of their leader, till S. Boniface, emphatically forbidding them to use their weapons, bade them await, without fear and without retaliation, those who could only kill the body, placing instead their whole confidence in Him Who would speedily grant them an entrance into His Heavenly Kingdom. Scarcely had he spoken these words of calm acceptance of the fate that so inevitably awaited them, before they all—all, that is, save some few, who saved themselves by flight—won at the hands of their heathen assailants the martyr's crown which the venerable S. Boniface himself at least had so long and ardently desired.

The remains of the aged Martyr were first conveyed to Mainz, but were afterwards interred by S. Lullus, according to his own previously expressed wish, in his Abbey Church at Fulda, where the Bible which he is said to have carried on the day of his martyrdom, and which still bears the stain of his blood, is preserved to this very day.

A SAXON FAMILY OF MISSIONARY SAINTS

S. WILLIBALD

BISHOP *d. circa* 790

S. WINIBALD

ABBOT *d. December 18th*, 761

S. WALBURGA

ABBESS *d. February 25th*, 780

(With whose legends are included certain details of the life of their father, S. Richard the Saxon, who died 7 February, 722.)

The histories of this father, sons and daughter are so inextricably interwoven, and any attempt to separate them would necessarily involve so much repetition, that, although S. Richard does not, strictly speaking, belong to the Missionary Saints, I have thought it advisable to include all their legends under one heading.

Little is known of the early life of S. Richard, save that he was a royal Saxon Prince who appears to have ruled over a portion of Devonshire, and that his first wife, Adinna, was a sister of S. Boniface.

His actual history therefore commences with the time when his three-year-old son Willibald, who had fallen grievously sick, was carried by his father, who was evidently a devout Christian, to the foot of the Crucifix that stood in the centre of the village where they dwelt, and was there restored, in answer to S. Richard's intercessions, from an almost certain death. In obedience to the vow made by his father on this occasion, to dedicate the child, if perchance he might be restored to him, to a religious life, S. Willibald

was entrusted two years later to the care of Abbot Egbald, of Waltham, near Winchester, whence he returned, at the age of twenty, deeply imbued with the missionary spirit and eager to persuade his father and his younger brother Winibald to accompany him on a pilgrimage to Rome and to the Holy Land.

Whether S. Richard voluntarily renounced his crown in order to share in this pilgrimage, or whether he had been deprived of it by some revolutionary movement, has remained an open question, but it appears that he willingly acquiesced in the proposal of S. Willibald, and that, after establishing Walburga, his daughter by a second marriage, in the Convent of Wimborne, under the care of Abbess Tetta, he sailed with his two sons from Southampton, on the way to Rouen, whence, by various stages, they reached Lucca, where S. Richard, who had apparently previously assumed the monastic habit, died and was buried in the Church of San Frediano in that city.

After their father's death the two brothers continued their journey to Rome, where both assumed the Benedictine habit, and whence, two years later, after his recovery from a fever which had attacked both Winibald and himself, Willibald at length set out on his projected pilgrimage to Palestine, whilst his brother remained in Rome, where he studied for the next seven years with the utmost diligence.

At the end of that period, Winibald returned to England, where he appears to have devoted himself to the attempt of arousing amongst his kindred the same fervent zeal for Christianity that now

distinguished his own character, and, as the evident fruit of his labours, returned to Rome accompanied by a considerable number of his relatives.

It was during this second sojourn in Rome that S. Winibald seems to have attracted the notice of his maternal uncle, S. Boniface, who, deeply impressed with the religious fervour of his young kinsman, bade him follow him to Germany and share his missionary labours among the heathen inhabitants of that country.

On his arrival in Germany, S. Winibald, who was then about forty years of age, was ordained priest by his uncle, and for the next three years laboured with unwearying zeal and with remarkable results among the Thuringian people.

But we must now turn for a moment to S. Willibald, who, on his return from his pilgrimage to the Holy Land, which captivity and illness had protracted over a period of seven years, had retired to the Monastery of Monte Casino at Naples, whence he was summoned in the year 740, like his younger brother, to join his uncle in his German mission-field, where he was almost immediately admitted to Priest's Orders, while a year later he was consecrated Bishop of Eichstadt, an office which was the means of bringing him once more into close relationship both with his brother and stepsister.

Observing that it was towards the monastic, rather than towards the clerical life that the inclinations of S. Winibald tended, S. Boniface, whose favourite method of evangelizing a district was to establish in its midst a religious community which should serve

not only to Christianize but also to civilize the neighbouring tribes, determined to appoint his younger nephew to the care of one of these monasteries. He consequently sent S. Winibald to his brother Willibald, by whose advice a tract of forest land, known as Heidenheim, situated near the sources of the Danube and within the boundaries of the diocese of Eichstadt, was selected as a suitable site, and here S. Winibald at once proceeded to establish a double monastery, that is to say a joint establishment for men and women, who, whilst obeying a similar rule under the same Superior, lived and laboured entirely apart from one another.

It was a task of no small danger to which S. Winibald was now destined to expose himself, since the sight of the monks, assisted by their future Abbot, who, notwithstanding his delicate health, laboured, axe in hand, amongst the rest, busily felling the trees that had played so important a part in their idolatrous ritual and superstitions, was a spectacle well calculated to rouse the indignation of the many heathen who still occupied the neighbourhood. In this case, however, wiser counsels prevailed; the threats of the natives who vowed to kill S. Winibald and to burn his monastery came to nothing, and before long the necessary buildings were so far completed that S. Winibald was in a position to invite his half-sister, S. Walburga, who had come to Germany in 748, together with a party of nuns from Wimborne, in response to the request of S. Boniface, and who had spent the two succeeding years at Bischofsheim in

the diocese of Mainz, and to appoint her Abbess, under his direction, over the convent attached to the monastery.

It was not long, however, before S. Winibald's health, which had never been robust, began to fail—possibly his maladies were aggravated by the austerities that he secretly practised—but in any case, for the last three years of his life, we are told that he lay a helpless cripple on his bed, beside which an altar was erected, in order that as he had formerly daily celebrated Mass in the Abbey Church, he might still offer daily in his cell the all-prevailing Sacrifice.

After the death of S. Winibald, which occurred in the sixty-first year of his age, on 18 December, 761, the double community over which he had hitherto ruled seems to have been entrusted to the care of his sister, S. Walburga, who, till her death, directed both monks and nuns alike with a humility and discretion that proved her to be fully worthy of a charge which, more especially for a woman, presented such almost insuperable difficulties.

A story that is told of S. Walburga during this period, when, notwithstanding her accumulated cares, or perhaps I should say in consequence of them, she appears to have redoubled her devotions, relates that on one occasion she had lingered longer than usual in the church over her prayers. On rising from her knees the Abbess gently bade the sacristan light her to her cell, a request which the latter, who was probably annoyed at her delay, gruffly refused, and left S. Walburga to grope her way thither in the dark,

and, since the meal in the refectory was long since ended, to retire fasting to bed. During that night the terrified nuns of Heidenheim beheld a brilliant light that issued from the cell where their holy Abbess slept, and no sooner had the matins bell rung than they hastened to describe to her what they had seen; whereupon, bursting into tears, S. Walburga humbly thanked God, Who of His good providence, in response as she believed to the intercessions of her departed brother, S. Winibald, had thus turned to honour the slight that had been cast upon her office.

It is further related of S. Walburga that on another occasion, under the influence of some Divine prompting, she made her way, alone and unattended, to the house of a neighbouring baron, whose daughter lay at the point of death. On reaching the entrance, unwilling in her humility to claim an entrance by right of her exalted dignity, she stood meekly at the door, patiently awaiting admission. The master of the house, chancing to see her, and supposing her to be some poor beggar woman, inquired with some asperity as to the nature of her errand, and expressed surprise at the boldness with which she thus exposed herself to the attacks of his savage hounds, who might easily have rent her in pieces.

"They will not hurt Walburga," replied the Abbess simply, whereupon the baron, after expressing his regret that so honoured a lady should have thus exposed herself to so rude a welcome, led her with the greatest respect into his house, rejoicing greatly in her promise that, if he had faith, the Great Physician,

Who had sent her to minister to his necessities, would recover his daughter of her disease. All that night S. Walburga kneeled in prayer beside the bed of the sick girl, and in the morning, after restoring to the astonished parents their daughter, who was perfectly cured of her malady, she returned as she had come to her monastery, alone and on foot.

On 25 February, 780, eighteen years after the death of her beloved brother, S. Walburga also entered upon her eternal reward, and was buried in the first instance in a cave adjoining her monastery of Heidenheim. Later, however, in consequence of the healing oil which was found to be exuded by her bones, and by which many miracles were effected, her relics were translated to a more dignified resting-place at Eichstadt, and it is apparently the fact that this translation took place on 1 May, that is responsible for the strange discrepancy which connects the name of a Christian Saint with the witches' revel, on what has, from her, acquired the name of " the Walpurgis Night " !

Some ten years later (*c.* 790) S. Willibald, who for the last ten years had thus been left the sole survivor of his saintly family, died at a good old age, and was buried in his own cathedral in the city of Eichstadt, which still regards him as its Patron Saint.

CHAPTER V

MONASTIC SAINTS

" Here, at least, were men
Who meant and did the noblest thing they knew.
Can our Religion cope with deeds like this? "

LOWELL.

S. BENNET BISCOP

ABBOT *d. January 12th*, 690

WHEN we first meet with Biscop Baducing, or, as he is better known to us, Benedict or Bennet Biscop, it is as a Northumbrian thane of noble birth, at the Court of King Oswy, who, attracted by his good looks, no less than by his prudent speech, was only too ready to bestow upon this promising courtier whatever lands and wealth the latter might consider due to his rank and station.

At the age of twenty-five, however, wearying of the transitory cares and pleasures of this present world, the youthful Biscop, abandoning his position at Court, started, in company with S. Wilfrid, whom he met at Canterbury, and whom he left behind at Lyons, upon what was to prove the first of many journeys to Rome, which with its stone churches, its stately ritual, and its glass windows exercised a remarkable fascination on one accustomed to the wooden

edifices and simpler services of the early Anglo-Saxon Church.

On his return from Rome, S. Bennet Biscop assumed the monastic habit at the Monastery of Lerins, where he spent the following two years, undertaking later a second pilgrimage to the Eternal City, whence he returned as secretary and interpreter to Theodore, the newly appointed Archbishop of Canterbury, by whom he was placed, pending the arrival of Abbot Adrian, in charge of the Monastery of S. Peter and S. Paul at Canterbury.

In 671, after he had duly resigned the abbacy of this great monastery into the hands of S. Adrian, S. Bennet Biscop for the third time journeyed to Rome, to perfect himself in monastic discipline and also to procure a large number of books which were destined to supply the library of the monastery which he already had in contemplation, and it was after this third journey that he applied to Egfrith, King of Northumbria, for land on which to found a monastery. Egfrith, who deeply sympathized with the enthusiastic plans of this enterprising monk, willingly gave him seventy hides of land at the mouth of the Wear, whereon, in 674, he proceeded to erect the Monastery of Wearmouth, dedicated to S. Peter—a monastery which was built in stone, by masons whom its Abbot himself fetched from France, whilst glaziers from the same country filled the windows with latticed glass and taught the Northumbrian workmen a trade that had been hitherto unknown in England.

In the year 680, delighted by all that he had seen at

Wearmouth, Egfrith commissioned S. Bennet Biscop to found, upon a second grant of land, the sister monastery of Jarrow on the south bank of the river, seven miles from Wearmouth, which when completed was dedicated to S. Paul, and was colonized by monks from the earlier community under the charge of Abbot Ceolfrid; and when matters were thus far arranged S. Bennet made a fourth journey to Rome, as a result of which he brought back with him to Wearmouth John the Precentor, who should more perfectly instruct his monks both in music and in ritual, and also an ample store of pictures, with which to adorn the walls of the churches both of Wearmouth and Jarrow, " in order that thus the ignorant might learn from them, as others did from books."

Hitherto it appears that all had fared prosperously with these two new monasteries of the North, but when S. Bennet Biscop returned from his final visit to Rome, during which he had left Wearmouth under the care of Abbot Easterwin, whom he had previously appointed his coadjutor in consequence of his own frequent absences at Court, it was to find that grievous news awaited him. The plague had devastated his monasteries, with such dire results that at Jarrow no single monk remained who could read, preach or chant antiphons, and there were left beside the illiterate brethren only S. Ceolfrid and one little lad, presumably the future Venerable Bede, who was then about thirteen years of age; for which reason the Abbot was sorrowfully forced to decide that, until others should come to fill the gaps, they

must dispense with all music at their daily offices. This arrangement continued for one week, but at the end of that time the Abbot found that the lack of the accustomed chanting brought home so bitterly to the poor unlettered monks that remained the loss of their more educated brethren, that he determined that, for the future, he and his youthful pupil must sing the antiphons between them.

Wearmouth also had suffered a severe loss in the person of Abbot Easterwin, who had also fallen a victim to the pestilence. But sorely as he was lamented by the sorrowing community, there was yet a deeper grief in store for it, when, three years before his death, S. Bennet, whom all loved and revered for his saintly wisdom and for his discreet counsels, was stricken with paralysis, which permanently deprived him of the use of his lower limbs, whilst Sigefrid, who had been appointed as successor to Abbot Easterwin, and whose health had always been of the frailest, was likewise laid upon a bed of sickness from which he never rose again.

It must have been indeed a pathetic scene when the comparatively youthful Sigefrid, who was destined to die the soonest, was carried in an almost dying condition into the cell where S. Bennet Biscop lay a helpless cripple, in order that the two might exchange the kiss of peace, and discuss in tones which weakness rendered scarcely audible, the future of the monastery they must so soon relinquish to the care of others.

It was only a few days after this last parting that S. Sigefrid died, while S. Bennet lingered six months later, to end his sufferings on 12 January, 690, leaving

to the care of Abbot Ceolfrid the charge of what then practically became the joint monastery of Wearmouth and Jarrow.

S. CÆDMON

MONK *d. latter half of 7th century*

In the Monastery of S. Hilda at Whitby dwelt a humble lay-brother named Cædmon, whose duty it was to tend the beasts that laboured on the estates belonging to the Abbey.

He was a simple, honest rustic, well advanced in years, but so unmusical and unpoetical that, when each man present was called upon to contribute a song on any specially festive occasion, he would slip away from his companions and seek refuge amongst his four-footed charges, so soon as he saw the harp approaching him.

This was just what had happened, when one night, after he had retired to the stable and lain down to sleep, he heard a voice beside him which bade him arise and sing.

"I know not how to sing," replied Cædmon humbly, "and it is for that very reason that I have left the feast."

"Yet there is somewhat that thou must sing to me," persisted the stranger.

"What must I sing?" inquired the astonished herdsman.

"Sing the beginning of created things," replied his mysterious visitor.

And in his sleep the poor unlettered lay-brother

began to sing, in improvised verses of marvellous beauty and to a melody of inexpressible sweetness, the praises of his Creator; but what was even more extraordinary was that, when he rose from sleep, he remembered clearly both the rhythm and the music that he had sung and was able to add to them other like words of praise.

When in the morning the steward, who was making his daily round, visited the stable, Cædmon told him wonderingly of the gift that he had that night received, and was at once brought before the good Mother Hilda, who commanded him, in the presence of the many wise and learned men who surrounded her, to rehearse his dream, after which, marvelling at the beauty of the melodies and the Anglo-Saxon metre of this divinely instructed poet, certain other passages of Holy Scripture were read before him, which he was bidden to transpose before the following day into sacred song.

Recognizing the divine source of a talent which could thus enable an illiterate herdsman to convert into sweetest harmony whatever passage of Holy Writ was once read before him, S. Hilda now admonished this humble lay-brother to exchange the secular habit for the monastic, which also he obediently did, and during the succeeding years which he spent at Whitby, during which he converted whole books of the Bible into metre, such was the reverence with which Cædmon regarded the sacred gift committed to him, that no persuasions could ever induce him to exercise it for any secular purpose.

Fourteen days before his death Cædmon was taken ill, but since his malady was such that he was still able to move about and to converse with his companions, no special anxiety was entertained on his account by the remainder of the community. The greater was therefore the general surprise when, though apparently in tolerable health, on the evening before his death he requested permission to retire to a little cottage, which was reserved for the use of those whose departure was at hand; but though the request excited some surprise, it was granted without demur.

That evening Cædmon spent in cheerful conversation with those who were already inmates of the cottage, but, when it was already past midnight, he asked of those who had charge of the sick ward in which he lay whether they had the Eucharist within.

"What need hast thou of the Eucharist?" they inquired. "Thou talkest so cheerfully that thou seemest in no wise like to die."

But Cædmon, minded to die at peace with God and man, insisted, and when he had assured himself that none amongst his companions harboured against him any resentment, he fortified himself with the Viaticum, and then inquired what time must yet elapse before the hour of Lauds.

"The hour is not far distant," replied his attendants.

"It is well," replied Cædmon. "Let us wait for that hour"; and crossing himself humbly, he laid his head quietly upon the pillow, and a short while afterwards passed away peacefully in his sleep.

" And thus it came to pass," says Bede, " that as he had served the Lord with a simple and pure mind and with tranquil devotion, so also when he quitted the world, he attained by a tranquil death to the Beatific Vision."

THE VENERABLE BEDE

PRIEST AND ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORIAN *d. May 26th, 735*

Born in a village near the mouth of the Tyne, which soon afterwards became included in the estates of the Monastery of Jarrow, and which was subsequently swallowed up by the encroaching sea, the youthful Bede was entrusted at the early age of seven to the care of Bennet Biscop, at the Abbey of S. Peter's, which the latter Saint had founded at Wearmouth in the year 674. A year later he was transferred to the care of Abbot Ceolfrid at Jarrow, where the remainder of his days were destined to be spent.

Ordained deacon, by special request of Abbot Ceolfrid, at the early age of nineteen, by S. John of Beverley, he was ordained priest by the same Bishop in 702, and whereas before his ordination he had spent much time in the copying of books, he began from this time forward to write them, and he declares himself that the happiest hours of his life, amidst the daily discipline and the daily care of singing in church, were those occupied in learning, teaching or writing.

Besides theological works, and notably the

Ecclesiastical History which he wrote at the request of King Ceolwulf of Northumbria, and *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, his works include treatises on nearly every branch of science and literature that was studied in his day; but with all his remarkable erudition he steadfastly refused all preferment, choosing rather to live a simple, humble and devout life amid surroundings which the association of many years had rendered dear to him.

So peaceful and uneventful appears to have been the history of this saintly scholar, that it is of the death of the Venerable Bede rather than of his life that we possess the fullest records, since a letter from a certain Cuthbert, one of his disciples, supplies a detailed account of his last days on earth.

About a fortnight before Easter, in the year 735, when the Venerable Bede was sixty-two years of age, he became afflicted with shortness of breath, but without pain, and during the period that followed, he ceased not to gather round him his disciples and to instruct them, labouring also the while with all diligence, if perchance he might before his death complete the translation of the Gospel of S. John, on which he was then engaged.

On the eve of the Ascension of Our Lord, being yet more painfully distressed in his breathing, he urged his disciples on to greater diligence, " for I know not," he told them, " how long I may survive, nor how soon my Maker may call me hence."

In the morning, after a wakeful night spent in humble thanksgiving, whilst the majority of his disciples were

walking in the procession that formed so important a part of the ceremonial of the Festival of the Ascension, one only of his scholars remained beside the dying Saint, whose breath was almost gone.

"Dearest master," the boy said to him, "there remaineth yet one chapter, and it is difficult for thee to question thyself."

"Nay," replied the Venerable Bede, "it is very easy: take thy pen and write quickly." And so the day wore on till eventide.

"There remaineth yet one sentence," said the scribe.

"Write quickly," answered Bede, still struggling bravely against the weakness that threatened to overpower him.

"Now it is finished!" exclaimed the youthful scholar, as he laid down his pen.

"It is well: thou hast spoken truly: it is finished. Support me, I pray thee, on the pavement, so that facing the place where I was wont to pray, I may once more call upon my Father."

And it was with the words of the Gloria Patri still trembling on his lips that the venerable Saint departed to his sure reward in the Kingdom of the Blessed.

S. STEPHEN HARDING

ABBOT *d. March 28th*, 1134

In the year 1095, in the diocese of Langres, in France, a Benedictine monastery was founded at Molesme by Robert, late Abbot of St. Michel de Tonnerre, and it

was here, attracted by the fame alike of the poverty and of the sanctity of this new community, that Stephen Harding, a young Saxon of gentle birth, who, after a careful education at the monastery of Sherborne, had continued his studies, first in Scotland, afterwards in Paris, and lastly at Rome, on his return from the latter city, sought admission as a novice.

It was not long, however, before, with growing prosperity, the greater number of the monks of Molesme became so lax and sensual in their conduct that their saintly Abbot, finding himself unable to restore them to their former devotion, resolved to leave them to their degenerate ways which he had failed to amend, and in 1098, accompanied by his Prior, Alberic, by Stephen Harding and by a few others who earnestly desired a life of stricter discipline, quitted Molesme and with the approval of Hugh, Archbishop of Lyons, obtained from Odo, Duke of Burgundy, a tract of marshy land at Citeaux, five miles from Dijon, on which to found themselves a monastery where the rule of S. Benedict should be observed in its fullest austerity, and of which S. Robert became the first Abbot.

A year later, however, the brethren of Molesme, realizing, perhaps, the dangers into which they were drifting, obtained from the Pope a mandate bidding S. Robert return to his former charge, who, after appointing Alberic Abbot in his room and Stephen Harding as his Prior, obediently resumed his former charge, in which his hitherto fruitless efforts were now crowned with success.

It was during the Abbacy of Alberic, who equally with S. Stephen shares the honour of being the founder of the Cistercian rule, for which the former first, in April, 1100, obtained the sanction of Pope Pascal II, that the habit of the order, which had hitherto been the dark brown appointed by the Benedictine rule, of which the Cistercian was an even stricter development, was changed to white, owing, it is said, to a vision, in which S. Alberic beheld the Blessed Virgin, for whom the Order expressed an especial devotion, placing a white garment upon his shoulders. But though the colour of the habit was changed, the scapular and pointed hood still remained dark as before.

The following beautiful legend is told of these early days of the Cistercian Order under Abbot Alberic.

In the year 1104 a stranger knocked at the humble wicket gate of the small monastery of Citeaux who differed from the visitors who usually came thither, in that he seemed familiar with the faces of the porter and of those whom he met within, though these latter, to the best of their recollection, had never seen him before. It was not till he was brought before S. Alberic and S. Stephen, and proceeded to relate his history, that the mystery was explained.

This stranger was a clerk, a student at the schools at Lyons, to whom, one night, as he lay asleep, a vision was vouchsafed, in which he saw before him a fertile valley, which encircled the foot of a lofty mountain, on the summit of which stood a city of surpassing beauty, so fair that none could once behold

it without experiencing a fervent desire to dwell therein. But when he approached the base of the mountain he found that it was encircled by a broad and deep stream, and as he sought a place where he might safely ford the river, he discovered, at a certain spot, some twelve or fourteen poor men, engaged in washing their garments, and amongst them one who by the radiance of his countenance and by the dazzling whiteness of his garments differed from the rest, and who, moving from one to the other of his companions, helped each in turn to remove the stains from his clothing.

"What men are these?" inquired the clerk, humbly addressing this mysterious Presence.

"These poor men are doing penance," was the answer, "and are washing themselves from their sins. I am the Son of God, Jesus Christ, without whose aid neither they nor any other can do aught that is good. This beautiful city that thou seest is Paradise, where I dwell—and he who has washed his clothes and made them white by penance shall enter into it. Thou thyself hast long sought a means to enter, but there is none other way that leadeth therein."

The sleeper awoke and pondered over this vision and shortly afterwards consulted the Bishop of Chalons as to its meaning, and the Bishop, after advising him to enter the cloister, recommended to him especially the newly founded monastery of Citeaux, where, to his astonishment, he recognized amongst the faces of the monks the countenances of those whom he had beheld washing their garments in the mystic river.

Upon the death of S. Alberic, which occurred in this same year, 1104, S. Stephen Harding, with the utmost reluctance on his own part, was unanimously appointed to succeed him as Abbot, whilst Robert, the monk of the vision just related, was appointed Prior in S. Stephen's room.

Under the Abbacy of S. Stephen the already stern discipline of the new community became increasingly severe. His rigid adherence to the principle that he and his brethren were bound in all particulars to imitate the poverty of their Divine Master, led him to forbid the use of all ostentation, even in such articles as were used in the ministrations of the Sanctuary. The crosses carried were to be no longer of gold or silver, but of wood or iron; the chalices were to be of silver gilt, and the other vessels of iron or of brass; the vestments must be of the plainest materials, and unadorned with fringes of gold and silver; whilst the buildings of the Order were to be fashioned according to the severest and most dignified style of architecture.

Nor was this the limit of S. Stephen's restrictions. In Odo, Duke of Burgundy, on whose territory the Monastery of Citeaux had been erected, the Cistercians had hitherto found a most kind and liberal patron, who was in the habit of frequenting the Abbey Church on all the greater Festivals, attended, of course, by a magnificent train of servants. The Abbot, however, dreading lest this display should rekindle in his monks an affection for the pomps and vanities of the world which their monastic vows had pledged them to renounce, humbly entreated this munificent friend to

abstain from all future visits to the monastery, deeming it better to alienate from the community the patronage of the wealthy Duke, than to expose to temptation the brethren committed to his care.

The first result of these innovations was to reduce the community to a state of utter destitution, and as Lent passed into Easter, and Easter drew on to Whitsuntide, without the prospect of the slightest alleviation, the Saintly Abbot alone preserved his faith, based on the words of the Psalmist that "they that fear the Lord shall want no manner of thing that is good," in the deliverance that he believed must shortly come.

Whitsuntide was already past, and the community was on the verge of starvation, when S. Stephen one day bade one of his monks go to the market town of Vezelay and buy there three wagons and three teams of horses, with which to convey home all the bread and other provisions that were so sorely needed.

"Give me wherewith to make the purchases you mention, and I am ready to go," replied the brother thus instructed.

"God will provide you with the money, and will send His angel to guard you on your journey," was the calm reply, and the obedient monk hastened to Vezelay, where he met a gentleman, who, when he had learned all the details of the case, combined with a friend, who was then lying on his death-bed, to supply all the needs of the community.

And from that day forward abundant contributions poured into the coffers of the monastery.

But though S. Stephen was afflicted by no further trials of this particular nature, they were succeeded by others of a far more heartrending description, when, in the year 1111, the pestilence visited the monastery and carried off so many of his zealous labourers that the tolling of the bell seemed to become the most familiar sound within its walls, and the saintly Abbot was forced to wonder whether this visitation might not be an indication of Divine disapproval of the Cistercian rule ; and it was only after a vision in which a lately departed monk returned to inform him that his life and conversation were well-pleasing to God, that S. Stephen was relieved from this harassing doubt.

Two years later, in the year 1113, the marvellous increase, which thenceforth distinguished the Cistercian Order, began, with the advent of a band of thirty persons, many of them members of the noblest houses of Burgundy, who under the leadership of a young man of some twenty-three years of age and exceeding fair countenance—the great S. Bernard—were come to beg admittance amongst the number of S. Stephen's novices.

It was on 14 April of the following year that, their novitiate ended, S. Bernard and his noble companions took the solemn vows, and from that time forward, so numerous were the postulants who followed their example, that within the next few years no less than four affiliated houses were founded in the neighbourhood, that of La Ferté in the same year, 1113, that of Pontigny in 1114, and Morimond and Clairvaux

in 1115, of which last S. Bernard was appointed by S. Stephen as the first Abbot, and beneath whose care what had formerly been the "Valley of Wormwood," became thenceforth "Clairvaux," "the Vale of Glory."

The training of S. Bernard was the culminating incident in S. Stephen's life, and thenceforward beyond the constant addition to the number of Abbeys belonging to the Order, the annual Chapters, which maintained them all in unity and obedience to central authority, and the sanction of Calixtus II, of the so-called "Chart of Charity"—the charter of the Cistercian Order, as compiled by S. Stephen—there is little to record of his further life.

It was at the Chapter held in the year 1133, a year after the confirmation of the Order just mentioned, that S. Stephen Harding, who was now blind and worn with years, at length expressed his desire to lay aside his heavy responsibilities and to end his days in holy contemplation.

He little knew that he had still another bitter ordeal to undergo before he should be permitted to depart in peace. The electors duly proceeded with the task allotted to them, but, as it happened, their choice fell upon a certain Wido, Abbot of Three Fountains, who, as S. Stephen already knew by Divine revelation, was a man utterly unworthy to succeed him. Unwilling, however, to interfere with the free election of his monks, S. Stephen Harding, for a whole month, esteemed it his duty to keep silence as to the degraded character of his successor, till, at the end of that

period, the new Abbot's crimes, with which we are unacquainted, were in some manner revealed to the community. Wido was deposed from his office, and Rainaldus, a monk of Clairvaux, was appointed in his stead.

Towards the close of his last illness, which ended on 28 March, 1134, we are told that the aged Saint overheard some of the brethren, who watched beside his bed, discoursing in subdued tones of the great reward that assuredly awaited so holy a man as their late Abbot.

"What is it that you are saying?" exclaimed S. Stephen, in the whispered rebuke which was all that his failing breath would allow: "Verily I say unto you that I am going to God as trembling and anxious as if I had never done any good. For if there has been any good in me, and if any fruit has come forth through my littleness, it was through the grace and help of God, and I fear and tremble much, lest perchance I have kept that grace less worthily and less humbly than I ought."

S. ROBERT OF NEWMINSTER

ABBOT *d. June 7th*, 1159

It was apparently about the year 1131—the year of the foundation of the Abbey of Rievaulx, the first Cistercian monastery that was built in Yorkshire—that details of this new rule and of the great austerities that it demanded of its adherents, reached the Priory of S. Mary's at York, and awakened in the hearts of

certain of its inmates a bitter shame for the slack observance of the Benedictine rule into which their own community had fallen.

On the Feast of S. Peter this little band, which, commencing with seven monks, had gradually increased under the leadership of Richard the Prior to twelve, approached the Abbot Geoffrey and entreated that he would insist upon some motion for reform. It was only the strict observance of the rule of S. Benedict, the rule to which the monastery was already pledged, that they demanded, but the Abbot, even if he inwardly approved their request, lacked the courage of a reformer, and, whilst he temporized, rumours of the movement reached the ears of the great majority of the monks. And since these latter infinitely preferred the lax discipline of the present to the severity of that with which they were threatened, a tumult ensued in which Richard and his little band found themselves obliged to appeal for protection to Thurstan, Archbishop of York, protesting that all they desired was " to follow Christ, Who was a poor man, in His voluntary poverty and to bear His Cross in their bodies."

The Archbishop, warmly sympathizing with their spirit of devotion, willingly wrote to the Abbot on their behalf, but the latter in reply, whilst expressing a like sympathy, openly avowed his inability to influence the community, and the Archbishop accordingly determined to interview the monks in Chapter. But when, on his arrival at York, he proceeded to enter the Priory with his long train of attendants, he

encountered such determined opposition from the impenitent brethren that he was obliged to consent to enter the Chapter house unescorted, whilst the meeting that subsequently ensued was so disturbed by the organized resistance of the Chapter, that he was forced to seek sanctuary with his protégés in the Church and finally to remove them from York and to establish them first in his own dwelling, and afterwards on the banks of the Skell, where they were lodged beneath the shelter of a huge elm-tree which, owing to the good providence of God, is said to have preserved its leaves during that whole winter.

The holy reputation of the Abbey of Our Lady of the Springs, Fountains Abbey, which almost immediately began to rise upon this spot and of which Richard became the first Abbot, and which was at once placed by its founders under the rule of S. Bernard, soon attracted the notice of one Robert, a native of Yorkshire, who after a childhood devoted to the pursuit of holiness, had become successively a parish priest in York and a monk of Whitby. With the consent of his Superior he left Whitby and joined the new community at Fountains, whom he found hewing down trees with which to build a chapel, and cheerfully subsisting on such supplies as the Archbishop was able to send them at his private expense. For two years this devoted band struggled on, increasing it is true in numbers but not in wealth, and at times reduced to scraping a bare existence from the roots and leaves around them ; and yet " there was no sign of sadness amongst them, nor sound of murmuring,

but all blessed God with entire favour, being poor in worldly goods but strong in faith."

At the end of this time, however, Abbot Richard deemed it advisable to travel himself to Clairvaux and to represent to S. Bernard the state of destitution to which he and his brethren were reduced, but even before his return, armed with the gift of a grange, which would amply relieve their necessities, he found that help had already reached the struggling community ; seeing that Hugh, Dean of York, had resolved to resign his office and to withdraw as a novice to Fountains, which he thenceforward endowed with all his worldly wealth.

From this time forward Fountains Abbey, whose monastic buildings now began to rise from their foundations, throve to such an extent, that when, five years after its foundation, Ranulph de Merlay appealed to Abbot Richard for monks to colonize a Cistercian house which he proposed to found at Newminster, near Morpeth, " a beautiful place, pleasant with water, and with a fair wood about it," his request could be readily granted, and a band of monks proceeded thither under Abbot Robert, who, during the past hardships, had surpassed all his brethren in zeal and cheerfulness.

A legend of this period relates that such was the abstinence practised by S. Robert, that on one occasion, when the fast of Lent was over, it left him with no appetite for food. Noticing this his distressed monks came to him on Easter Day, to ask if there was nothing that he would fancy.

"I could eat, I believe, if I had it, a morsel of oaten bread spread with butter," replied S. Robert. But by the time this modest meal had been provided, the Saint was so grievously dismayed at what he now regarded as the greediness of his request, that he insisted on bestowing it on a poor youth who was awaiting an alms at the gate of the monastery, and who, from the radiance of his countenance and from his instant disappearance so soon as he had partaken of the food, was universally accredited to be an angel.

Another story, related in the *Lives of the Cistercian Saints*, edited by the late Cardinal Newman in 1844, records how on one occasion when S. Robert had been visiting a distant grange belonging to his monastery, from which he was anxious to return to Newminster in time to keep some great festival, he borrowed a somewhat dilapidated horse which was sometimes used on the farm, and, drawing his cowl over his face, started off on his journey, his mind engrossed in prayer and meditation. Upon the road, however, he met a nobleman who was riding to Newminster to seek S. Robert, and who, never dreaming that the rider of this sorry steed could be anything but a lay-brother, inquired of him somewhat abruptly whether the Lord Abbot was at home.

"When I was last at the grange the Abbot was there," replied S. Robert, with perfect truthfulness, though with a certain reluctance to reveal his identity. But, of a sudden, something—possibly the unexpected dignity of his manner which ill-accorded with the

humble station that the layman had allotted to this strange monk—caused the nobleman to recognize in the speaker the saintly Abbot of Newminster, and springing from his own well-appointed horse, he insisted that S. Robert should complete his journey on it, while he himself humbly rode beside him on the jaded steed belonging to the farm.

At length, on the Saturday after the Feast of the Ascension, in the year 1159, S. Robert fell grievously ill, according to the prediction of his devoted friend, S. Godric of Finchale, to whom he had long acted the part of spiritual adviser, and who, on the day of S. Robert's death, 7 June, 1159, beheld at that very hour the following vision.

He saw, whilst he was praying, an intense radiance, that penetrated the darkness of the night, and two glistening walls which reached from earth to heaven, and between these walls, amid songs of celestial joy, he beheld angels which bore upwards between them the soul of Abbot Robert, which resembled, so it seemed to him, a globe of fire. And as the soul of his beloved friend, over whom the Arch-enemy of the human race could obtain no power, reached the golden portals of Heaven, the aged hermit beheld the gates roll backwards of their own accord, and heard a voice which twice repeated from within the Celestial City, "Enter now, my friend."

S. ÆLRED

ABBOT *d. January 12th, 1166*

Born at Hexham, in the year 1109, S. Ælred seems to have been remarkable, even in his childhood, for the purity and innocence of his life, and when, on the completion of his education, he was invited by King David, who had become interested in the handsome and clever lad during his own residence in England, during the reign of his brother Alexander, to the Scottish Court, he speedily endeared himself, by the nobility of his character, to that excellent monarch.

The manifest favour with which the young Englishman was treated appears to have at first roused a considerable feeling of jealousy among the Scotch courtiers with whom he came in contact, but this was speedily disarmed by the humility and gentleness with which the affronts they offered him were accepted.

On one occasion when S. Ælred had been openly insulted in the King's presence by one of these envious nobles, the former, without the least suspicion of rancour or of sarcasm, meekly thanked him for his charity, "since I perceive, sir, that you are a sincere man and a lover of the truth, and it is good for me that I should be told of my faults"; whereupon the courtier, moved by this gentle reply to a sincere penitence for the spitefulness of his accusations, at once proffered an ample apology and begged to be admitted to the friendship of his former enemy.

Noticing the evident tendency of his young favourite towards a religious life, King David appears to have entertained the idea of making him a Bishop, in which office he might still have rendered inestimable service to his royal patron. It was a dignity, however, to which S. Ælred, who had already set his heart on the cloister, had no inclination to aspire, and from this period his life at the Scotch Court became a constant struggle between the monastic vocation and the strong ties of friendship that still held him a prisoner.

At length, however, in the year 1133, reflecting that sooner or later death must in any case temporarily sever the ties that so closely bound him, the young man resolved to yield to his obvious vocation, and, abandoning the Court, sought admittance as a novice at the Cistercian Abbey of Rievaulx, which had been founded so recently as the year 1131, by the charity of Walter d'Espec, under the rule of Abbot William, a disciple of S. Bernard of Clairvaux.

To S. Ælred, whose remarkable purity of life soon attracted the notice of his superiors, was before long entrusted the care of the novices, amongst whom was a young man who, wearying of the severity of the life that he had chosen, was desirous of returning to the world, and with the reluctant consent of the Master of the Novices, who had done his utmost to dissuade him, left the monastery. All that day S. Ælred spent in prayer and supplication for the lost sheep, who was thus abandoning the fold, till, when night fell, the truant once more sought admittance at the monastery gate, round which, in spite of all his efforts to the

contrary, his journeyings all that day had caused him to revolve as in a circle.

Later, when in 1142, S. Ælred was placed in charge of the new Cistercian colony at Revesby in Lincolnshire, this same monk appears to have accompanied him thither, and to have rebelled once more against the discipline of the Cistercian life. S. Ælred, after listening to his complaints and bidding the refractory monk seek in prayer the strength to persevere in the observance of his vows, promised that he would, so far as possible, mitigate in his case the severity of the long fasts and watchings that their rule ordained. This relief, however, proved insufficient, and it was with the intention of returning finally to the world that the monk again prepared to leave the monastery. But once again S. Ælred's intercessions prevailed to intervene between him and his purpose, since, though the monastery gates stood open wide, the apostate brother, notwithstanding all his efforts, was restrained by some invisible force from passing through them, and finally, moved this time to a more sincere repentance, returned to S. Ælred with the promise, which he fully redeemed, of observing to his life's end the profession that he had so solemnly made.

During the early days of his religious life, Ælred, who was of a singularly affectionate disposition, was especially attracted by a young monk of the name of Simon, "the very sight of whose humility stifled his pride," as he writes in *The Speculum*, or *Mirror of Charity*—"and made him blush at the immortification of his own looks." To his grief, however, after eight

years, during which the law of silence forbade any single word of conversation to pass between the two friends, this Brother Simon died ; it would seem as if some supernatural discipline, which even if salutary must have been hard indeed to bear, was always ready to intervene between S. Ælred and any object of his earthly affections.

But if S. Ælred was remarkable for his sanctity, he was also famous for the writings, which, thanks to the wise influence of Abbot William, who recognized the scholarship of his disciple, he was induced to hand down to posterity—notably *The Speculum*, or *Mirror of Charity*, a treatise on Spiritual Friendship, and an account of the Battle of the Standard, besides other historical works, whose value is unfortunately lessened by the excessive credulity of their author.

On the death of William, the first Abbot of Rievaulx, in 1145, S. Ælred was appointed in his stead, but of the latter years of his life we know comparatively little, save that he undertook divers journeys on the business of his Order, and that for many years before his death, in addition to the delicate health from which he had always suffered, he was afflicted with a terrible chronic disease, which caused him intense agony. But whereas in his former infirmities he had never mitigated the observance of the most rigid austerities, which had reduced him to a mere skeleton, but which he had regarded, as he himself expresses it, as " that yoke which doth not oppress but raiseth the soul ; that burden that hath wings, not weights," so now, in the more grievous pain that

he was called upon to endure, he bore himself with perfect patience, devoting his time to constant prayer and to a more profound contemplation of the Holy Scriptures.

The following brief extracts from the words of his intimate friend Gilbert, Abbot of Swineshead, spoken on receipt of the news of the death of S. Ælred, which occurred on or about 12 January, 1166, seem to furnish a fitting epilogue to his life :

" His intellect was clear, and his speech thoughtful. He was modest in his questions and more modest in his answers. Patiently did he bear with those that were troublesome, although he himself was a trouble to none. . . . He was swift to hear and slow to speak ; not that he could be said to be slow to wrath, for he had no wrath at all. . . . In his doctrine he looked not for that wearisome subtlety which has more to do with disputation than instruction. . . . We must mourn that such a man has been taken from us, but still we may rejoice that we have sent forth such a bundle of myrrh from our poor garden on earth to the garden of Heaven, where he is now an ornament and a help to us on earth."

S. GILBERT OF SEMPRINGHAM

ABBOT *d. February 3rd*, 1189

S. Gilbert, the founder of the English Order of the Gilbertines, was born in or about the year 1083, at Sempringham in Lincolnshire, where his father Jocelyn, a Norman noble, had settled on the ample estates

granted him at the Conquest. Puny and almost deformed in body and dull of intellect, S. Gilbert in his youth certainly afforded no promise of his future greatness, and it was only when he began to study in Paris, whither, according to some accounts, he had fled to escape from the taunts he met with in his own home, that his talents developed with extraordinary rapidity, and won for him the reputation for scholarship which he ever afterwards enjoyed.

On his return to Sempringham he at once seems to have interested himself in the boys and girls of the parish, whom he proceeded to train according to monastic rule, and shortly afterwards his father, though his son was still a layman, bestowed upon him the livings of Sempringham and West Torrington, whose combined revenues were sufficient to supply, in addition to a private income, the necessary stipend for a parish priest, who should minister to the spiritual needs of the two villages.

A tale, which probably belongs to this period of S. Gilbert's history, relates how a certain tenant farmer on S. Gilbert's glebe, presuming apparently on the good-nature of his rector, omitted, before storing his corn at harvest time, to pay his tithes. S. Gilbert, however, who, as it appears, was a trifle less easy going than his tenant had chosen to believe, promptly insisted on the removal of every sheaf from the barn, and, when he had obliged the man to count them over carefully, and to deliver to him, as was his bounden duty, a tenth portion of their number, caused this enforced tithe to be carried to an adjoining

field and burnt, declaring that that which had been stolen from God and from His Church was manifestly also unfit for the service of man.

In 1123 S. Gilbert was himself ordained a priest, but it was apparently not till 1131, after his father's death, that he personally undertook the charge of his two parishes, and only in the year 1135 that he actually commenced the foundation of his Order, which at the time of his death, 1189, had increased to such an extent that it numbered in all thirteen monasteries.

The Order originated with the conversion of a humble dwelling, built close against the wall of Sempringham Church, into a place of refuge for seven maidens who were desirous of preserving their virginity, and who were there trained according to the rule of S. Benedict. Owing, however, to the rapid growth of his small community, S. Gilbert, as early as 1139, found it necessary to establish a second convent at Haverholme, and before long deemed it advisable to attach to each of his conventual buildings a certain number of Canons Regular, living under a separate roof, whose duty it was to minister, though only in the presence of many witnesses, to the spiritual needs of the nuns, with whom they were strictly forbidden all further intercourse.

To these two existing sections of the Gilbertine Order, for which its founder, with the assistance of the great S. Bernard, had compiled a rule, there was soon added a third, in the form of a large community of lay-brethren, for the most part labourers of the un-

educated class, who, since the Canons devoted their time mainly to study, were needed to perform the manual labour of the rapidly increasing convents and estates of the Order, but who soon proved themselves a source of considerable trouble to S. Gilbert. The latter, in 1148, had attempted to affiliate his convents to the Cistercian Abbey of Clairvaux, a request which had been rejected by S. Bernard and his monks in Chapter, on the plea that their Order admitted no female communities, and S. Gilbert, who had consequently found himself obliged to assume the post of superior of his own Order, was now involved in serious difficulties, owing to the rebellion of this third branch of his community against the severity of the rule to which they had submitted themselves. S. Gilbert, it appears, was entirely willing to mitigate, in their case, certain clauses of the Rule to which they took exception, but finding that their complaints took the form of a strike, he not unnaturally refused to do so unless he were approached in a proper way. The result was that some of these lay-brethren deserted the convent and circulated many accusations against S. Gilbert, for which he was haled before divers tribunals, till at length the immorality of their conduct so invalidated their charges, that before long they could find no one to grant them a hearing.

In his later years, however, S. Gilbert found himself exposed to a far more serious trouble. It was a well-known fact that S. Thomas of Canterbury, during his flight from Northampton to the sea-coast, on his way to France, had received shelter at the Gilbertine

convent at Haverholme, but it was further affirmed by the enemies of the Order that S. Gilbert had supplied the Archbishop with funds for his escape, and for this offence against the King he was before long cited to appear before the judge in London. Now the charge as it happened, was entirely unfounded, but since S. Gilbert, owing to his reverence for the exiled Archbishop, was unwilling to refute the accusation of what he would have regarded as a perfectly justifiable and even laudable action, it soon appeared as if the lawsuit would terminate with the suspension of S. Gilbert, and it probably would have done so if the King, who had always entertained a profound respect for the sanctity and humility of the now aged Abbot, had not reserved the case for his own judgment and ordered the release of the prisoner.

It seems to have been only when his sight failed him in his old age that S. Gilbert, who had hitherto governed his Order in the capacity of a secular priest, resigned the office of Abbot into the hands of his disciple, Roger, Canon of Malton, from whom he now, for the first time, received the white habit of the Gilbertines and rigidly observed the accompanying vow of obedience.

Even in his latter years—he lived to the great age of 106—S. Gilbert never omitted any portion of the austerities to which he had all his life subjected himself, taking such indispensable rest as he needed not in his bed but in a chair ; spending long hours in prayer and meditation ; totally avoiding all meat, and during Lent even fish, whilst each day, beside his place at

table, there stood a dish, known as the "plate of Jesus Christ," in which he deposited, for distribution amongst the poor, all that he considered best of the meagre fare provided for him. It is even asserted, that until the very day of his death, which occurred on 3 February, 1189, he would refuse, notwithstanding his great infirmities, to allow his meals to be brought to his room or to suffer himself to sleep during the hours of daylight.

CHAPTER VI

HERMIT SAINTS

" Think ye the spires that glow so bright
In front of yonder setting sun,
Stand by their own unshaken might?
No—where the upholding grace is won,
We dare not ask, nor Heaven would tell,
But sure from many a hidden dell,
From many a rural nook unthought of there,
Rises for that proud world the Saints' prevailing prayer."

KEBLE.

S. HERBERT OF THE LAKE

HERMIT *d. March 20th, 687*

THE legend of S. Herbert, hermit of Derwentwater, presents an almost pathetically simple tale of the self-abnegation of friendship.

The friend of S. Cuthbert, and " almost," as one of his biographers writes, " his equal in sanctity," the former Saint became the object of universal veneration, the latter was practically forgotten.

Scarcely anything is known of S. Herbert's earlier history; probably he was a monk, either of Lindisfarne or Melrose; certainly he became, by S. Cuthbert's advice, an anchorite on one of the small islands on the Lake of Derwentwater, that still bears his name, where in the midst of his rigorous exercise of abstinence and devotion, he allowed himself one solitary human relaxation—a yearly visit to his more illustrious friend.

When S. Cuthbert had already been for one year Bishop of Lindisfarne, S. Herbert, hearing that that Saint was about to visit Carlisle, went thither, as his annual custom was, to visit him, and when the two, as their manner was, had communed long together on spiritual matters, S. Cuthbert, interrupting their discourse, spake as follows: "Brother Herbert, remember to ask me now whatever you have need to ask, for after this parting we shall not again see one another with our bodily eyes. I know that the time of my dissolution is at hand, and that I must shortly put off this earthly tabernacle."

"I beseech you that you desert me not," cried S. Herbert, casting himself with tears at the Bishop's feet. "Be mindful of your most faithful companion, and entreat the supreme Goodness that we may pass together to behold the Grace of Him Whom we have served together here on earth."

The holy Bishop knelt in earnest prayer; then, rising to his feet, he assured the saintly hermit that his prayer was granted, and that they two should depart together from the flesh.

S. Cuthbert resigned his See of Lindisfarne, and retired to the island of Farne, to prepare himself for death; S. Herbert, returning to his cell, as if to make up that which he yet lacked in comparison to his friend, joyfully endured for long months the chastisement of bodily suffering; but on the selfsame day and at the selfsame hour, 20 March, 687, the souls of these two Saints, united in blessed vision, passed together to their eternal rest.

Seven centuries later a Bishop of Carlisle, chancing to read the above narrative as written by the Venerable Bede, ordered that henceforward S. Herbert be commemorated in Crosthwaite parish and that this commemoration should be observed on the anniversary of his death, by the celebration, on S. Herbert's Isle, of S. Cuthbert's Mass. Is it possible to imagine any form of observance that would have been more entirely in accordance with the wishes of this most humble and devoted friend!

S. GUTHLAC OF THE FENS

HERMIT *d. April 11th, 714*

Legend relates that on the occasion of the birth of S. Guthlac, to the amazement of all beholders, a ruddy hand was seen to reach down from heaven and to touch a cross that stood above his mother's door—a supernatural token that was generally understood to signify that the new-born child was destined to become a "man of glory."

Years passed on, however, and any fulfilment of this prediction, from a religious point of view, seemed more remote than ever. The child grew up into a handsome, sturdy, self-willed lad, deeply imbued with the story of his country's wrongs and with the spirit of the ancient heroes of his own Mercian race, who had formerly wrought deliverance amongst their fellow-countrymen, and so eager was he to follow what he thus regarded as the noblest of all vocations that, at the early age of sixteen, he appointed himself

chieftain of a band of followers, who, in the name of patriotism, perpetrated the most horrible cruelties against the surrounding Britons, who had harassed their forefathers in bygone days. Eight years had passed in this manner, when, during the long hours of a wakeful night, Guthlac at length realized with remorse that both his task of self-imposed vengeance and the manner of its execution were of a nature highly displeasing to God, and with a sudden determination thenceforward to abandon his former mode of life, he rose betimes and, after taking an affectionate farewell of his companions, made his way to the Monastery of Repton, where he sought admission as a novice.

Two years later Guthlac, with the permission of his superiors, crossed with two companions in a fisherman's boat to the little island of Croyland, where he prepared to lead a hermit life, amid the appalling solitude that in those days pervaded the Lincolnshire Fens.

After taking up his abode on this lonely spot on S. Bartholomew's Day, 699, S. Guthlac, who from that time forward adopted this particular Saint as his especial patron, lived a life of the strictest abstinence, clothing himself in skins and subsisting on a single meal a day, which consisted only of barley bread and water, and struggling with all his might, by the grace of God and through the intercessions of His Holy Apostle, S. Bartholomew, to repulse the assaults of the evil spirits which frequently assailed him, not only by sensual temptations, but sometimes also in visible forms, casting him at length, weary and spent,

among the thorns and briars outside his cell. It may be mentioned that the representations of S. Guthlac that still exist usually exhibit the whip, with which his holy Patron is said to have provided him for the purpose of defending himself against these demoniacal attacks.

It has already been stated that S. Guthlac was accompanied in his retreat by two monks from Repton. Now it is related that one of these two, Beccelin or Bertelin, as he is variously called, jealous, as it would appear, of the holy reputation of S. Guthlac, and probably with the intention of succeeding him in his hermitage and becoming himself the confidant of the various personages of note, who came to consult the famous recluse, conspired at length to kill his master.

S. Guthlac, however, divinely instructed of the evil that possessed his servant's heart, addressed him in the following terms: "Why, O my Beccelin, dost thou conceal the old enemy beneath this carnal breast? Why not vomit forth these pestilential waters of bitter poison? I know that thou art deceived by the evil spirit; wherefore confess the guilty meditations which our enemy, the accuser of the human race, hath sown within thee and turn thyself away from them." And at these words, realizing at length that his murderous thought was in very deed a temptation of the Evil One, the would-be assassin cast himself at S. Guthlac's feet, implored his pardon, and from that day forward served him with the most loyal devotion.

During the later years of his life at Croyland,

S. Guthlac seems to have been comforted by angelic visitants, whose voices were at times discerned by his attendants blending in such consoling anthems as, "They shall go from strength to strength, and unto the God of gods appeareth every one of them in Sion."

But I think that one of the characteristics of this hermit Saint, which more especially appeals to us, is his profound sympathy with the wild beasts who would fearlessly and harmlessly come to feed out of his hand, and with the wild birds who would build their nests and rear their young under the protection of his humble roof; though to the discredit of the latter it is recorded that they sometimes put S. Guthlac to considerable inconvenience by stealing the property of his visitors.

The Rev. Gerard Sampson, in his *Layman's Book of Saints*, relates in this connection a delightful episode, in which when the swallows were one day nestling and singing joyfully about his shoulders, S. Guthlac turned to his friend, S. Wilfrid, who had apparently expressed some surprise at the familiarity that evidently existed between the latter and his feathered friends, with the words: "Hast thou never learned, brother, that he who hath led his life after God's will, the wild beasts and birds have become the more intimate with him, just as to those who leave the world, the angels approach the nearer."

At the age of forty-seven, knowing, as we are told, "that his hours were numbered," S. Guthlac, apparently on the very day of his death, 11 April, 714, sent his faithful servant, Beccelin, to his sister,

Vega, with whom, though she had for many years led the life of a recluse in the neighbourhood of Croyland, he had esteemed it his duty to converse but seldom, "that they might the more assuredly meet hereafter in the presence of God," to bid her come in haste to superintend his burial, the place of which was immediately afterwards marked by the erection of a tiny oratory.

Two years later, Ethelbald, immediately on his restoration, in accordance with the reiterated prediction of the departed Saint, to the throne of Mercia, after driving huge stakes and piles into the marshy ground and filling up the surrounding interstices with soil brought thither from a distance of nine miles, erected on the spot a church and monastic buildings, destined to be set on fire by the Danes in the year 870, as a funeral pyre for the monks who had presumed to conceal the treasure of the community at the first intimation of the enemy's approach. The monastery, which soon rose again from its ruins, was once more destroyed by fire in the year 1091; a portion of it was overthrown by a violent storm during the first half of the thirteenth century; but amidst all the vicissitudes of their career, such ruins as have survived the havoc wrought during the dissolution of the reign of Henry VIII, still bear upon their east front a statue of the saintly hermit to whom the Abbey owed its original foundation. There stands S. Guthlac, with S. Bartholomew's whip in his hand, and at his feet a serpent, which surely, in this instance, is intended as a symbol of vanquished sin.

S. NEOT

HERMIT *d. July 31st, 877*

There is so much that is legendary in the life of S. Neot, and so little that is definitely historical, that I can only attempt to record here some of those legends which are usually connected with his name, and certainly there are few saints to whom more picturesque traditions are attached.

It is generally accepted that the Saint was of royal descent, and some, with considerable probability, would even identify him with Athelstan, the eldest son of Ethelwulf, King of Kent and subsequently of Wessex, by a first marriage, and stepbrother to that King's younger sons, Ethelred, Ethelbert, Ethelbald and our great King Alfred. This much at least is certain, that Prince Athelstan, after bearing a heroic part against the Danes, on the field of Sandwich, in the year 751, disappears entirely from view. Is it not conceivable that the royal Saint, who presented himself a year later at the gates of Glastonbury, and as Neot (—the New), which is evidently an assumed name, demanded admission as a novice, was this same Athelstan, who was thus renouncing the throne for the cloister?

Of his sojourn at Glastonbury, where he "drew off by imitation the graces of all within the monastery to make them his own, and so procured for himself the reins of divers virtues," and where he was, with humble reluctance, promoted to the priesthood, the following legend has been handed down to us. During the mid-

day hour of prayer and meditation, S. Neot was on one occasion keeping the door of the monastery, when he was disturbed by a loud knocking from without. Now the latch of the door was very high, whereas S. Neot was very small in stature, and since silence was strictly enjoined during this noonday hour, there was no opportunity of procuring help from some taller brother. It was therefore to prayer that S. Neot resorted for assistance, and instantly, in answer to his supplications, the latch slid downwards to the level of his hands, and there remained as a permanent testimony to the Divine aid that had thus succoured him. Dr. Whitaker relates that as late as the close of the fifteenth century the iron grating was still preserved at Glastonbury on which S. Neot was wont to stand "when he officiated in the solemn service of the Mass."

After a time, however, the desire for greater solitude led S. Neot to leave Glastonbury, and with one companion, Barius by name, to follow the Divine guidance whither it would lead him. After a journey therefore of about three weeks, taken in a westerly direction, and performed, as a matter of course, on foot, the two reached a fair valley in the midst of a desolate neighbourhood, where, beside a healing fountain, sanctified by S. Gueryr, "the Medical Saint" of Cornwall, stood a tiny chapel, and it was here that S. Neot was inspired to take up his abode.

During the seven years of S. Neot's sojourn in this secluded valley we are told that he was miraculously sustained by the fish from the fountain close at hand. Every morning, so the legend states, three fish were

to be seen playing in the sparkling water, and of these S. Neot was divinely instructed to take one for his daily sustenance. Yet on the following morning there would always be again three fish swimming in the water. On one occasion, however, when S. Neot was ill, it is related that his companion, Barius, careful rather of his master's health than of obedience to the Divine command, took two fish, instead of the appointed one, and dressed them in different ways, in the hope of thus tempting the Saint's precarious appetite. But no sooner did S. Neot discover what had happened, than he ordered Barius to replace in the water both fish, who were soon swimming about as gaily as if nothing unusual had occurred.

On another occasion it so happened that a hunted doe, closely followed by the dogs, fled for protection to the hermit saint. But no sooner did the dogs behold their victim lying at S. Neot's feet, than they instantly fled away into the thicket, leaving the doe uninjured, whereupon the huntsman, apparently the owner of the dogs and not a menial, deeply impressed by this that he had witnessed, instantly prostrated himself humbly before the holy Hermit, and afterwards proceeded to the monastery of S. Petroc, where hanging up his horn before that Saint's shrine, he assumed the religious habit and ended his days as a monk.

After seven years spent in S. Gueryr's cell, S. Neot, who was no less a scholar than a saint, determined to abandon his life of seclusion, and to found a college of priests at Neot Stoke, and here, as previously in his

eremitical days, it appears that he was frequently visited by his younger brother, Alfred, who relied much upon his prudent counsel and spiritual instruction. It must have been during this period of S. Neot's life that certain thieves came by night and stole the oxen that were employed to plough the lands belonging to the college. Early in the morning the frightened monks hastened to S. Neot's cell to tell him what had occurred, but the Saint, utterly undismayed, merely bade them return to the field whence they had come, where to their amazement they found four beautiful stags waiting to be yoked to the plough. It was not long before the tidings of so notable a miracle reached the ears of the robbers, who, smitten with remorse, speedily restored the stolen oxen, and, after confessing their sins and receiving the absolution of the Saint, requested permission to enter the service of the college, presumably as lay-brethren. When the oxen were thus again restored to their former duties, S. Neot bade the stags return to the forest whence they had come, but tradition relates that for generations afterwards the descendants of these stags retained around their necks and upon that portion of their shoulders where the yoke had pressed, a ring of white, in remembrance of the time when their ancestors had drawn S. Neot's plough.

On 31 July, of the year 877, S. Neot died, surrounded by his sorrowing monks, yet thrice again, as we are told, was his form witnessed by human eyes on earth. The days of trial for King Alfred were almost ended, his sojourn in the humble refuge of the herdsman's

hut of Athelney was already past, and his troops were once more rallying to his lately deserted banner, when one night as he slept the deposed King once more beheld that elder brother, whose counsel he had so often sought in his more peaceful days, and who had so clearly foretold to him the days of his adversity. He was now the bearer of more joyful tidings.

"In the seventh week after the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the depths below, I will head thine army, then reassembled in the east, and in the power of the King Supreme, Who will fight for thee against the profane, I will give thee victory from Heaven."

With this magnificent promise the vision faded, and during the seven weeks that ensued, Alfred appointed to the men of Wessex a trysting-place in Selwood Forest, where he should meet them at the time appointed by the Saint, and it was the night before the battle, which was to decide the fate of King and country alike, that S. Neot a second time appeared to his younger brother, as he rested in his tent, and, assuring him of the success that should attend his arms in the coming conflict, bade him rise in haste and seize the victory that lay within his grasp.

Obedient to the Saint's command the King roused his sleeping soldiers and led them to Ethandune (Heddington) on the banks of the Avon, where the Danes, utterly unaware of their proximity, rested in false security, and whence, taken entirely by surprise, never suspecting the vastly inferior numbers of the force that was thus boldly attacking them, they fled

in panic from their camp and suffered a disastrous defeat at the hands of their pursuers.

But it was not by human force alone, so tradition tells, that victory was won for Alfred's cause, for as the din of battle rolled across the valley, many beheld, midway betwixt earth and Heaven, a radiant form that bore aloft King Alfred's banner. It was S. Neot, who, recognized by King Alfred alone, was marshalling the Saxon troops to the recovery of their kingdom and their liberty.

S. GODRICK OF FINCHALE

HERMIT *d. May 21st, 1170*

I suppose that in S. Godrick we have an example of that sheer asceticism which, however much we may admire the self-sacrifice and devotion that inspired it and which made it the glory of its own age, is almost too far removed from the teaching of religion in the present day—that it is man's duty to develop the capacities not only of his soul, but also of his body to the glory of God and to the service of his fellow-men—to appeal much to our modern imaginations.

The son of lowly parents, born at Walpole in Norfolk, S. Godrick began life as a pedlar, and it was in the course of the constant journeys that he made to fairs and other such places, where men were wont to congregate, that the sanctifying influence of the monks of Lindisfarne inspired him with the desire for an eremitical life.

It is almost inconceivable, when one considers the

difficulties of travel in those days, when even roads were comparatively non-existent, and when the journeys of the poor were accomplished entirely on foot, that this young pedlar, merely as a preliminary preparation for the life he contemplated, should have undertaken pilgrimages first to the Holy Land and afterwards to S. Giles in France, and also to Rome, and that it was only on his return from this latter city, that he at length considered himself fit to obey the Divine command to such as would excel in the path of self-sacrifice: "If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell all that thou hast and give to the poor."

The following two years were spent by S. Godrick in a lonely wilderness in the neighbourhood of Carlisle, under the direction of one Godwin, whom some would have to be a monk of Durham, and others an uneducated layman, who having sometimes conversed with the monks of Durham was able to instruct his companion in the ways of monastic discipline.

At the end of these two years, however, after an illness of fifteen days, during which S. Godrick nursed him day and night with the most devoted care, Godwin died, and S. Godrick, in obedience it is said to a vision of his special patron S. Cuthbert, started on a second and still more rigorous pilgrimage to Jerusalem, vowing that on his journey he would eat only a little barley bread and that of the driest, drink only water, and never change his clothes, nor even his shoes, till he reached his journey's end; and, excruciating as the pain must have been that the unfortunate pilgrim suffered from the stones that forced their way through

his worn-out soles, it is affirmed he never once on that account remitted any portion of the distance that he had appointed as his daily journey.

On his return to England in 1107 S. Godrick finally established himself at Finchale, where, under the direction of the Prior of Durham, he lived for the last sixty-three years of his life, during which period it is recorded that he only thrice emerged from his solitude —once to attend the midnight Mass at Durham, once to make his Easter Communion at the cathedral, and once in obedience to a distinct summons from the Bishop, and on each of these occasions we are told that the bloody footprints of his bare feet could be traced along the whole road that he had traversed.

With the exception of these three journeys to Durham, these sixty-three years were spent in the most severe abstinence and discipline, and in continual meditation and devotion, which were frequently interrupted by manifold sensual temptations as well as the assaults of the Devil in divers visible forms, all of which S. Godrick successfully overcame by the prevailing power of prayer; whilst unless in obedience to the direct commands of the Prior, under whose direction he had placed himself, he spoke with no one, save only the priest whose duty it was to confess him and to administer the Sacraments in the little oratory that adjoined his cell.

During the greater portion of his life as a hermit, the latter years of which were comforted by many glorious visions both of Saints and Angels, S. Godrick, in addition to the fearful spiritual ordeals to which

he was subjected, suffered from various painful maladies, all of which he bore with the utmost meekness, patience and even gratitude, and which at length increased to such an extent as to render him incapable of even moving his limbs. But even when thus reduced, for several years before his death, which occurred on 21 May, 1170, to a state of complete helplessness, and entirely dependent on the kind offices of the priest who served the tiny chapel near his cell, we are told that his face still continually bore an expression of the utmost sweetness and dignity, and that he was constantly heard repeating with his lips the names of the Three Persons of the Ever-Blessed Trinity.

S. BARTHOLOMEW OF FARNE

HERMIT *d. June 24th*, 1193

Born at Whitby in the early years of the twelfth century, S. Bartholomew appears to have led, in his youthful days, a rough and careless life that certainly afforded no indication of the future asceticism of his manhood. And yet, even in these wilder days the call to a higher life, which, even if it exercised some momentary influence upon his reckless disposition, passed practically unheeded, seems to have come to him in the form of a thrice-repeated vision.

He dreamed that in a cloud of brightest glory he beheld our Lord with His Blessed Mother at His side, and heard our Lady say to him, in tones of sweetest condescension: "Follow thou the footsteps

of my Son, that He may have pity on thee, and pray thou humbly to Him Who is merciful."

And as Bartholomew, sinking on his knees in deepest emotion, thrice repeated the prayer, "Lord Jesus, have mercy upon me," our Lord, graciously accepting his earnest supplication, thrice raised His hand in benediction.

But even such a vision was insufficient to divert Bartholomew from his evil courses, and it was only during a three years' sojourn in Norway, whither he had gone in search of adventure, that the influence of a saintly Priest led him finally to abandon the error of his ways and to dedicate himself to a religious life.

On his return from Norway S. Bartholomew entered the Benedictine Monastery at Durham, till, at the end of a year of his novitiate, in December, 1151, S. Cuthbert, in a vision, summoned him to adopt an eremitical life on the holy island of Farne, of which place, so it is said, S. Bartholomew had never even heard. No sooner, however, had he learned, upon inquiry, that it was the spot on which S. Cuthbert himself had for many years led a hermit life, and where he had afterwards died, than he presented himself before the Prior, and eagerly sought and gained permission to take up his abode upon the barren island which he found to be hallowed by so many sacred memories.

S. Bartholomew's life upon his lonely island was not so idle a one as might have been imagined, since, in addition to the daily offices which he religiously observed in the chapel which adjoined his cell, he farmed his barren soil, fished in his own boat around

his rock-bound coasts, dismissed with his blessing the mariners who frequently visited S. Cuthbert's Chapel, ministered to the fisher-folk who often crossed from the opposite shore to seek his counsel not only in spiritual matters, but also as regards the weather, and even at times acted as pilot among the treacherous currents that beset that dangerous shore.

But there is yet another very attractive trait in his character in which S. Bartholomew closely resembles his great predecessor at Farne, and this is the sympathy that seems to have existed between himself and the feathered creation. The wild sea-birds learned to flock together at the sound of his voice, and were ready to take their food from the hand of one who defended them with all his authority from the hands of any that would injure them, and so powerful was his influence amongst them that he was even able to train the stronger, to a great extent at least, to desist from the molestation of their weaker comrades.

Tradition relates that on one occasion, during S. Bartholomew's absence, a hawk entered his cell and finding there a smaller bird which the Saint had tamed, cruelly killed it. The culprit, however, was unable to find a means of egress from the building, and when, in consequence, the hermit returned to find his favourite dead and the murderer with its beak still smeared with blood, he detained the latter for two days in confinement and without food, as a punishment for its crime, after which, in compassion, he set it free to return, as we must hope, in a chastened mood, to its former haunts.

Another, and I think an even more delightful legend tells us that on one occasion when the Saint was seated on the rocks, he was surprised to see a cormorant alight beside him and commence plucking the edge of his habit with its beak. S. Bartholomew, rising from his seat, followed the bird, which led him to a deep crevice in the rock, into which one of its young ones had fallen; whereupon the holy hermit, withdrawing the little bird safely from its perilous position, restored it to its mother, and thus justified the implicit confidence that the older bird had thus boldly placed in the kindness of its human friend.

At length, when S. Bartholomew had lived for forty and two years upon this lonely island a life of the humblest sanctity and of the most ascetic devotion, he was warned by a further vision of S. Cuthbert, whom he beheld in the early hours of the Festival of the Nativity, robed in his episcopal vestments and preparing to celebrate the Christmas Mass in the chapel where he had so often officiated whilst on earth, of his approaching death.

Six months later, on the Feast of S. John the Baptist, 1193, the monks of Lindisfarne, one of whose number had dreamed that the saintly hermit had entered his rest, crossed the intervening water in their little boat, and finding S. Bartholomew lying dead in the stone coffin which he had himself procured in preparation for his departure hence, buried him according to his previous request, in the little Chapel of S. Cuthbert that he had loved so well.

CHAPTER VII

SAINTLY WOMEN OF SAXON TIMES

"With bowed heads and open hearts, may we offer ourselves. We can do no more, and we dare do no less."—WESTCOTT.

S. ETHELDREDA (AWDRY)

QUEEN AND ABBESS *d. June 23rd, 679*

S. ETHELDREDA, or as, in former times, she was more usually called in this country, S. Awdry—the only Englishwoman who is included amongst the Black-Letter Saints in our Prayer-Book Calendar—was the daughter of that Anna, King of East Anglia, who laboured so indefatigably for the conversion of his subjects, and was thus enabled to reckon amongst her sisters, S. Ethelburga, S. Sexburga and S. Withburga, all of whom were celebrated for their singular piety and devotion.

If left to follow her own inclinations, S. Etheldreda would undoubtedly have renounced the world in her youth, but this, probably for political reasons, was not permitted to her, and she was married, whilst still very young, to Tonbert, prince of the South Gyrvi, who inhabited the fen country, who apparently, in accordance with her wishes, left her free to observe her secret vow of perpetual virginity, and who bestowed upon her what was then the island of Ely,

to which, upon his death, which occurred some three years later, she withdrew, with the intention of spending the remainder of her life in religious seclusion.

Once again, however, political arguments prevailed to interrupt the self-imposed course of S. Etheldreda's career, since a few years later, as we are told, the Saint, who was then thirty years of age, was forced to marry Egfrith, the heir to the Northumbrian throne, who was then only a boy of fifteen.

For some years, owing to Egfrith's youth, S. Etheldreda was allowed to pursue the mode of life that she had adopted with her former husband, but, as was indeed almost inevitable, the young prince had no sooner attained to his inheritance and to the passions of manhood, than he began to require something further of the wife whom he had so long adored at a distance. Finding, however, that no persuasions of his own could produce any effect upon S. Etheldreda, he appealed to S. Wilfrid, on whom the latter had bestowed a grant of land for the erection of Hexham Abbey, and who, as the King, who also counted this holy man amongst his friends, was well aware, could influence her more than any other human being, and offered him immense rewards if he would persuade the Queen to overcome her aversion to the married estate and to live with him as his wife. S. Wilfrid—and I think we cannot but wish that he had acted differently—appears to have feigned acquiescence in the King's desires, whereas, all the while, he never ceased to encourage S. Etheldreda to persist in the observance of her childish vow of celibacy, and even

went so far as to urge her to seek Egfrith's permission to quit the Court and to assume the religious habit.

Whether the King was ever actually induced to consent to his wife's request has apparently remained a doubtful point, but even of those authorities who most clearly affirm that such consent was granted, there are many who maintain that it was conceded only under protest, and who allow that whilst it certainly differed widely from the full and free acquiescence that was required of both parties, before either husband or wife was at liberty to sever the marriage bond and to renounce the world, it was almost immediately retracted. We only know for certain that S. Etheldreda, with or without the consent of her husband, proceeded with all possible haste to Coldingham, where, under the protection of S. Ebba, Egfrith's aunt, and seemingly in anticipation of speedy pursuit, she at once received the veil at the hands of S. Wilfrid.

Whether this action on the part of S. Etheldreda was actually justified by her youthful pledge, or whether this pledge had been already cancelled by her subsequent profession of the marriage vows, which, though they were unquestionably undertaken with reluctance, were, in so far as I have been able to discover, never repented of, is a point which I should prefer to leave to a Higher Judgment, but I think that in any case we cannot but deplore that two such noble Saints as S. Wilfrid and S. Etheldreda should have adopted, even in the achievement of what may have been, in itself, a laudable object, methods which although they won for them the approval, nay, even

the admiration, of many of the most worthy of their contemporaries, were scarcely in accordance with our modern standard of honour.

It seems that only a few days had elapsed since S. Etheldreda had thus become a cloistered nun, before, warned by S. Ebba of her husband's desperate attempt to reclaim her as his wife, the former Queen fled from Coldingham in the direction of her own estates of Ely—thus starting on a journey which, as tradition relates, was attended by various miraculous adventures.

It is related that on the very first day of her flight S. Etheldreda and her two attendants, Sewara and Sewenna, were all but captured by the indignant husband at S. Ebb's Head. The fugitives, it is said, promptly sought refuge on a high rock jutting out into the sea, where, as if in Divine manifestation of the purity of the Saint's resolve, the tide rose to such a height as to render her place of retreat absolutely inaccessible, and continued at this unwonted level for the space of seven days, at the end of which time Egfrith, realizing that the forces of nature, in subjection to a Higher Power, were in league against him, finally abandoned his pursuit and returned to his own home.

On another occasion legend describes how, on a certain hot summer's day, when S. Etheldreda, overpowered by fatigue, had sunk upon the burning plain to rest, her staff, which she had thrust into the ground beside her, took root and budded, in such a manner that, when she awoke from sleep, she found herself overshadowed by a mighty oak, which ex-

ceeded in size and dignity all others that grew in the surrounding district.

On her arrival at Ely, S. Etheldreda at once proceeded, in the year 673, to erect one of those double monasteries, for both men and women, that were so common in her day, over which she ruled for seven years, "a pattern and document of heavenly conversation and a leader to eternal life," and whither many of her friends and relatives resorted to lead under her saintly direction a life of prayer and discipline.

After practising for seven years the most rigid austerities, whereby she imposed upon herself the use of none but the coarsest garments, and the practice of partaking, except at the greater Festivals or in case of illness, of but one scanty meal a day, S. Etheldreda fell sick of the quinsy which caused her death, and which, as we are told, she regarded as a punishment for what she now described as her excessive love of dress and especially for her former habit, when at Court, of wearing a necklace of the most magnificent jewels round her neck.

An operation was performed in the hope of saving her life, which for the first two days seemed likely to prove successful, so that many hoped that she would recover, but on the third day, being "again pressed with her former griefs, she was also suddenly taken out of the world, changing all pain and death into perpetual health and life," and was buried, at her own express desire, in a simple wooden coffin.

Sixteen years later S. Sexburga, who had succeeded her sister as Abbess of Ely, being desirous of removing

the remains of the departed Saint to a more honourable position within the church, dispatched certain brethren in search of a stone coffin, which, owing to the fact that the marshy land that surrounds Ely supplies no large stones, she was unable to procure in the immediate neighbourhood. The messengers for this purpose embarked by ship, and reached in due time what was then the city of Grantchester, near Cambridge, where, to their joy and amazement, they discovered, close beneath the walls, an empty coffin, wrought in the fairest marble, wherein, on their return, they laid the body of S. Etheldreda, which when removed from its former grave was found to lie there uncorrupt, as if asleep, enveloped in linen that was as pure and sweet as on the day of her burial. The date of this translation of her relics, 17 October, is the day which is still observed by our Church as the Festival of S. Etheldreda.

S. EDILBURGA

ABBESS *d. October 11th, latter half of 7th century*

The daughter of Offa, King of East Anglia, it would appear that S. Edilburga was amongst those Virgin Saints who from their earliest childhood eschewed the world and its allurements, but who " for her more probation found her father a most cruel persecutor, and enemy of her faithful mind and endeavours. . . . For he, urging her to marry a mortal man, that had chosen Christ that never dieth, and had betrothed

herself to Him, the father, not enduring her refusal, vexed her not a little nor a little space."

In order to escape the persecution to which she was thus exposed, S. Edilburga was resolved, with only one companion, to make her escape across the Channel, in order there to assume the religious habit; and it is probable that she would have attempted what, in those days, was still a somewhat perilous project, if her brother, S. Earconwald, who in the year 666 had founded a monastery at Chertsey over which he himself ruled as Abbot, in his desire that his sister should not abandon her native country, had not obtained from France a saintly English nun, Hildelid by name, who should instruct the former in the religious life, and in the year 677 erected for both teacher and pupil, in the proximity of Barking, a double monastery, under the Benedictine rule, over which S. Edilburga was duly appointed as the first Abbess.

It happened, however, that at length the pestilence, which from 664–684 ravaged the whole of Saxon England, drew near to Barking, and finally attacked that portion of the monastic buildings that were allotted to the male portion of the community, in consequence of which S. Edilburga earnestly desired of her nuns that they would select a site for the cemetery where they should themselves be laid, if the same pestilence should perchance overtake them also. The nuns, however, who apparently shunned so obvious a preparation for this particular form of death which must, it seemed, almost inevitably, assail them within a brief space, refused to give a definite

answer, until one night, when they had proceeded, on the conclusion of matins, to recite the accustomed offices beside the graves of those brethren who had already preceded them out of this world, a wondrous light from Heaven fell upon them, which filled them with alarm by its wondrous brilliancy, and which, after removing itself towards the south side of the monastery, reascended whence it had come, thus clearly indicating the spot whence this same light should shortly attend heavenwards the souls of these same consecrated handmaids of the Lord.

A further legend tells that shortly after this miraculous circumstance, a certain nun, named Torchgyth, who for the last nine years had suffered from a severe disease, after she had left her cell towards the dawning of the day, plainly beheld what she conceived to be a human body, brighter than the sun and laid upon a couch covered with fairest linen, emerge from that part of the conventual buildings to which the nuns were usually carried on the approach of death. And as she watched more intently she perceived this body to be drawn upwards by cords brighter than gold, until, received by the opening heavens, it vanished from her sight. Then Torchgyth, after she had carefully considered the interpretation of the vision that she had thus beheld, concluded that it pointed to the imminent departure hence of the holy Mother of the Community, whose life had been such that none could doubt but that the heavenly country would open to receive her.

And so indeed it came to pass, since only a few days

later, on 11 October, S. Edilburga, stricken with this same terrible pestilence, joyfully entered into rest, and was succeeded in her holy office by that same Hildelid who had formerly crossed from France to train her to fulfil the same.

S. HILDA

ABBESS *d. November 17th*, 680

I suppose that we have in S. Hilda one of those Saints of whom we would fain have known more, but of whom history has preserved for us but few particulars, thus leaving us more or less free to form our own estimate of her character from the brief account that remains to us of the labours that she so successfully accomplished. And yet I think that the very measure of these labours and of the results that she achieved will amply supply the deficiencies of the scanty details we possess. When we remember that she ruled for many years over a double monastery in such a manner as to win from monks and nuns alike a grateful recognition of her truly motherly qualities, and that the Saxon Church owed no less than five worthy prelates, and amongst them the famous S. John of Beverley, to the result of her training, may we not assure ourselves that she was a woman of strong but quiet faith, of wide human sympathies and of profound and practical common sense—just one of those women who, canonized or uncanonized, have in every station and in every age, exercised an influence for good, not so much by what they say as

by what they are—women to whom the majority of mankind, in their inmost hearts, almost instinctively attribute a place amongst the Saints of God.

The daughter of Hereric, a Northumbrian prince, who was murdered in exile by his enemies, and of Bregeswide, his wife, it is related that before the birth of her daughter, Bregeswide dreamed that whilst she was diligently seeking her husband, who was then in banishment, she thrust her hand beneath her garment and discovered there a most magnificent necklace, which straightway illuminated the whole of Britain with its radiance—a prediction that was most admirably fulfilled in the daughter who was afterwards born to her.

After the death of her father, the nephew of S. Edwin, S. Hilda was apparently entrusted to the guardianship of her grand-uncle, since the next we hear of her is at the age of thirteen, when she knelt beside the saintly King at the font, to receive, at the hands of S. Paulinus, the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. What became of her during the persecutions that arose after S. Edwin's martyrdom is not certainly known, but it was apparently at the Court of Oswy, who had married her cousin Eanfleda, the daughter of King Edwin, that, at the age of thirty-three, she finally determined to renounce the world and after a brief sojourn at the Court of her nephew Adulph, King of East Anglia, journeyed to Chelles, where her sister, Hereswithe, who had retired thither on the death of her husband, Adulph's father, had already taken the veil.

A year later, however, S. Hilda was recalled to

England by the earnest solicitations of the great S. Aidan, who desired to commit to her care the Convent of Hartlepool (Hereteu), which had been founded not long since by the saintly Heiu, the first cloistered nun in Northumbria.

Nine years later, when King Oswy, who, in his distress, had vowed to dedicate his new-born daughter, Elfleda, to a conventual life, if what appeared to be a most improbable victory might perchance attend his arms, after his triumph over his Mercian foes at Winwidfield, near Leeds, confided to his wife's cousin, Hilda, the care of this consecrated infant, and granted to her, at the same time, a considerable tract of land on which to erect a monastery, S. Hilda removed to Streneschalch, or as it is now called Whitby, and there erected the famous double monastery with which her name is so inseparably connected, and where, in the words of the Venerable Bede, " Bishop Aidan and all the religious men who knew her visited her often, loved her devotedly, and instructed her diligently, on account of her innate wisdom and her delight in the service of God."

In the great Easter controversy, which culminated in the Council held at Whitby, under her rule, S. Hilda, together with the greater part of the Northumbrian Church of her day, proved herself an enthusiastic adherent of the rule inaugurated in the north of England by S. Aidan, the monk of Iona, though in her desire for Catholic unity she yielded meekly to the decree of the stronger party, and thenceforward loyally abode by its decision.

For the last six or seven years of her life S. Hilda suffered from a painful and lingering illness, which she accepted with humble gratitude and patience, and which she never permitted to interfere with the most studious performance of her duties as Abbess. It happened, however, in the early hours of 17 November, 680, that, in the convent of Hackness, which S. Hilda herself had founded, and which lay some thirteen miles from the Monastery of Whitby, a holy nun, named Bega, was mysteriously conscious, in her sleep, of the sound of a certain bell which was only rung to rouse the community to pray for the soul of some departed brother or sister, whilst, as in a vision, she saw the roof of Whitby gently lifted to permit of the entrance of an angelic host, who straightway reappeared, bearing upward in their midst, through an attendant cloud of brightest glory, the soul of the saintly Abbess Hilda.

As this supernatural vision faded before her eyes, Bega, aroused from sleep, rose instantly from her bed, and informing the other nuns of that which she had thus miraculously beheld, summoned them to the church to join in intercession for the soul of the departed Saint; whilst the brethren who came in the early morning from Whitby to bring to Hackness the news of the loss that both communities had sustained during the past night, confirmed the fact that this vision had occurred at the very moment when S. Hilda, fortified by the last Sacraments of the Church, had passed to her eternal rest.

Tradition relates that at the time when S. Hilda

first came to Whitby, the neighbouring shores were infested by poisonous serpents, which sorely afflicted the inhabitants. These serpents were converted, by the prayers of S. Hilda, into stones; and the many serpent-like ammonites, which still abound amongst the rocks of Whitby, are to-day pointed out by the country-folk as those very same of which their ancestors of bygone days were relieved through the intercessions of the holy Mother Hilda.

S. EBBA OF COLDINGHAM

ABBESS *d. August 25th*, 683

Little is known of the early life of S. Ebba, save that she was the sister of S. Oswald and that it was probably owing to his influence and to that of S. Aidan that she renounced the idea of marriage and dedicated herself whilst still young to a religious life, and, after taking the veil at the hands of S. Finan, the successor of S. Aidan at Lindisfarne, founded a convent at Ebchester on the Derwent, a place which still commemorates her name.

But it is as Abbess of the great double monastery of Coldingham, which she also founded, that S. Ebba is best known to us; and here it would appear that notwithstanding the undoubted sanctity of her personal character, which is clearly illustrated by the fact of the friendship that existed between S. Cuthbert and herself, she was confronted by a task that somewhat exceeded her powers of organization, since before

long grievous abuses seem to have arisen between the convent and the monastery, of which the saintly Abbess, for a considerable time, remained in complete ignorance.

The terrible revelation was brought about in the following manner. Among the monks of Coldingham was a certain Brother Adamnan, who in his youth had committed some grievous sin, for which he had sought absolution from an Irish priest. Doubting, however, lest the penance of frequent prayer and fasting that his confessor enjoined on him should prove insufficient to win for him the Divine forgiveness for which he so earnestly longed, S. Adamnan pointed out that, being young and strong, he could easily endure some much severer penalty, and suggested that he might, for instance, pass the whole week without food.

"It is too much for you to continue the whole week without food for the body, and it is sufficient to observe a fast of two or three days," replied the priest. "This do, until after a while I return to you and explain to you more fully that which you must undertake and how long you must persevere in your penance." Then bidding S. Adamnan fast entirely save on the Lord's Day and on the fifth day of the week, and devote frequent nights to prayer, the confessor left him. But since, for some unforeseen cause, he was soon afterwards recalled to Ireland, whither he departed without again seeing the penitent, and whence he never again returned, S. Adamnan, who had vowed to perform this penance until he should be released from it,

deemed it his duty to observe it faithfully during the remainder of his life.

When S. Adamnan was one day returning after some errand to the Monastery of Coldingham, his companion, observing the sadness of his face as they came in sight of its buildings, inquired as to its cause.

"I weep," replied S. Adamnan, "because the time is at hand when consuming fire shall convert to ashes all these buildings that you now behold, both public and private."

No sooner had the two brethren reached Coldingham than S. Ebba, who was at once informed by the second monk of what S. Adamnan had told him, sent for the latter and inquired more fully into the cause of his grief.

"But lately," was the answer, "whilst I was engaged by night with vigil and Psalms, I perceived beside me one whose countenance was strange to me, but who, when I showed alarm at his presence, bidding me not to fear, addressed me as with a familiar voice, saying: 'You do well, who at this hour of nightly quiet have chosen to persevere in vigils and in prayer.' To whom I replied that it is needful for me to be instant in salutary vigils and constantly to entreat pardon for my transgressions. Whereupon he replied: 'You speak truth, seeing that you and many others have need to redeem the past by good works; and when you cease from your temporal duties, then to labour more freely for the enjoyment of the good things that are eternal. Yet it is very few that do this; since even now, when I have inspected each bed and cell within

the monastery, I have found none save yourself that was occupied in the care of his soul; but all, men and women alike, are either wrapped in slothful slumber or are awake to commit sins. For even the cells which were built for prayer and reading are now converted into places of revelling, drunkenness, conversation and other allurements. The virgins also, who are dedicated to God, have laid aside all reverence for their profession, and whenever they have leisure, spend their time in weaving fine garments, in which to adorn themselves like brides, to the danger of their condition, or to gain themselves the favour of strange men. Wherefore now a fearful vengeance from Heaven with raging flames is deservedly prepared for this place and its inhabitants.'"

And when the Abbess inquired, one must confess with considerable reason, why this information had not been revealed to her sooner, she was told that it was the fear of causing her distress that had hitherto sealed the lips of S. Adamnan, but that for her comfort she might know that the predicted calamity should not befall the monastery under her own rule.

Warned of the terrible fate that awaited them, unless they should repent them of their evil habits, the inmates of the monastery, for a time at least, abandoned the error of their ways. But it was an amendment of no long duration, since on the death of S. Ebba, which occurred on 25 August, of the year 683, they appear to have relapsed at once into their former sins, in which they persevered until the vengeance which S. Adamnan had foretold, and in

which, in their false security, they had learned to disbelieve, inevitably overtook them, and the Monastery of Coldingham was, in the year 686, reduced to ashes.

S. EBBA AND HER COMPANIONS

MARTYRS *c.* 870

Two hundred years later another S. Ebba bore rule over the restored monastery of Coldingham, of whom it is recorded that when news reached her of the approach of Danish invaders, she assembled her nuns in the chapter-house and there, in order to preserve her vow of chastity against the assaults of the heathen pirates, seized a razor and with her own hand mutilated her nose and upper lip—an example which was immediately followed by the whole of her community. It is said that the Danes, in their anger at this self-inflicted disfigurement on the part of their intended victims, set fire to the convent, all of whose inmates perished in the flames, and were thenceforward commemorated as martyrs.

S. WERBURGH

ABBESS *d. February 3rd*, 699

(With whom is included the legend of her brothers, S. Wulfhad and S. Ruffin, Martyrs.)

It must undoubtedly be admitted that the legend of S. Wulfhad and S. Ruffin, which forms an indispensable prelude to that of their sister, S. Werburgh, is one that presents considerable diffi-

culties. To begin with, although they were the sons of Wulfhere, who is always described as the first Christian King of Mercia, and of his wife Ermenilda, whose name is included amongst those of the Saints, these two youths, so the legend states, owed their Christianity not, as might reasonably have been expected, to their parents, but to S. Chad, to whose hermitage in the neighbourhood of Lichfield they were originally led through the instrumentality of a white hart, and whom they thenceforward visited under pretext of hunting in the forest near. So far the story usually related of these two youthful martyrs remains identical, but as regards the sequel we have two alternative versions, of which, if the former accords the best with this preliminary portion, I think the second presents, to some extent, the fewer improbabilities.

According to the first of these traditions, Wulfhere, who, at this period of his life, had lapsed, possibly from political motives, from Christianity, and who, after the customary manner of the apostate, was peculiarly envenomed against the Faith that he had so recently professed, was led by a certain Werebold, a soldier of noble birth, to whom the King was for various causes deeply indebted, but who earnestly desired the deaths of the two young princes, to S. Chad's Oratory, where he found his two sons diligently performing their devotions, and where, infuriated by this sight, and having utterly failed in his attempt to induce them to renounce their Faith, he cruelly slew them both with his own sword. Whilst

he was returning, however, with the triumphant Werebold to the royal palace, the latter, who is described as having been "overtaken by the devil," perished miserably in his lord's presence, owning "that for vengeance of this deed that he had done, his soul to hell it must full soon"; for which reason, Wulfhere, self-convicted at this terrible spectacle, in bitter remorse, went to the Queen, and by her advice made humble confession to S. Chad, who after long penance absolved him, on condition that he should erect an Abbey at Stone in Staffordshire.

The second version, which, though still difficult of belief, presents if anything the fewer problems, relates that Wulfhere, who was apparently at best a very lukewarm Christian, in return for Werebold's incalculable services, was anxious to espouse his daughter, Werburgh, to this loyal supporter of his throne; whereas his two sons, S. Ruffin and S. Wulfhad, who, owing to the careful teaching of the saintly Bishop, had embraced their religion with an intense zeal and fervour, very different from that of their father, objected to their sister, who was also a devout Christian, being thus forced into marriage with a heathen.

The story goes on to relate how Werebold, unable by fair means to overcome the opposition of the two young princes, by dint of his extraordinary influence over his master, succeeded in procuring from the latter his permission to arrest the two princes on a charge of treason, and that it was only after the two youths had paid the extreme penalty of the law for their falsely imputed crime, that their father, realizing

the duplicity of his minister and filled with remorse at the awfulness of the deed in which he could not but acknowledge himself a participator, made full confession to S. Chad, and strove by the whole-hearted efforts which he thenceforward made to exterminate idolatry within his dominions and by the foundation of the two Abbeys of Stone and Peterborough, to make atonement for the atrocity of his guilt.

Whether, however, it was for the sin of actual murder, or, as I have presumed, more probably for that of allowing himself, at the expense both of his religion and also of his paternal affection, to condone the unjust execution of these two youthful martyrs, it is with another manifestation of King Wulfhere's repentance that we are at present more immediately concerned, since S. Werburgh, deriving courage from her father's penitent mood, now sought and, in the year 674, obtained the royal permission—a permission which would probably have been granted under no other circumstances—to renounce the world and to take the veil at Ely, under the guidance of her great-aunt, the saintly Abbess Etheldreda.

Of the subsequent period of S. Werburgh's life we know but little, save that she succeeded her mother, S. Ermenilda, who had been in her turn the successor of S. Sexburga, S. Etheldreda's sister, as Abbess of Ely; but we learn that, whilst still young, this Saint, who is described as a person of "great cheerfulness and benevolence, and of a peaceful and happy disposition," was later entrusted by her uncle, Ethelred, with the supervision of all monasteries in his kingdom

of Mercia, where she subsequently herself founded at any rate three religious houses, namely, one at Trentham in Staffordshire, one at Hanbury in Huntingdonshire, and a third that was constructed upon the foundations of a royal palace at Weedon-le-Street in Northamptonshire.

In relation to the sojourn of this saintly Abbess at the last-named of these convents, a decidedly quaint legend is related. Being warned by the labourers of her establishment that great flocks of wild geese were in the habit of devouring her crops, S. Werburgh one day commanded that these geese should be driven within the precincts of the convent, a treatment to which the geese, contrary to all expectation, submitted as meekly as if they had no wings. The next morning, after releasing the geese from their confinement, S. Werburgh straightly charged the whole flock to depart in peace and to return no more to that neighbourhood, and the geese duly took their flight, but only to return, within a few moments, in manifest distress, which was speedily accounted for by a fact which now, for the first time, transpired—namely, that one of the servants had stolen and eaten one of their number. S. Werburgh, deeply grieved at the breach of faith in which she was thus innocently involved, instantly restored the bird alive and in perfect condition to its companions, who thereupon quietly flew away, and from that day forward wrought no further havoc amongst the fields of Weedon.

A further strange story is related concerning the

death of S. Werburgh, which occurred on 3 February, 699, at Trentham, where in direct opposition to the desire previously expressed by their late Abbess to be buried at her Convent of Hanbury, the community, after depositing her mortal remains in their own Church of Trentham, and after locking the gates, themselves kept careful ward over them from within. That night, however, when messengers were sent from Hanbury to fetch the remains of the departed Saint and to convey them in accordance with her known wish to the church of that convent, a deep sleep overpowered the guards who were appointed to keep vigil in Trentham Church, during which the gates and doors of the conventual buildings flew open of their own accord to admit the invaders, who were thus enabled, without let or hindrance, to remove their sacred burden to Hanbury.

During the Danish invasions S. Werburgh's body was removed, in 875, to the greater security of Chester, by which city this Saint was thenceforward adopted as its patroness.

S. FRIDESWIDE

ABBESS *d.* 735

Anger and resentment reigned in the heart of Algar, prince of Mercia, when he presented himself, attended by a gorgeous retinue, at the gates of Didan, the Saxon prince of Oxford, only to learn that the bride whom he had come to claim, but who from her youth had dedicated herself as the Bride of Heaven, had fled at the first news of his approach.

Accompanied by two of her maidens, Frideswide had fled away to the banks of the Thames, where, as it had already been revealed to her in a dream, she found a boat waiting to convey her to a certain spot where she was bidden to land, and whence, after long journeyings through the forest, she reached a swineherd's hut, which should provide her with the shelter she so sorely needed.

Here, in this remote spot, Frideswide and her companions abode for one month in peaceful security. But Algar was not content so easily to surrender a bride so remarkable for her beauty, her wealth and for her learning, and one day, as Frideswide wandered in holy meditation through the woodland glades, she started in terror at the sound of approaching footsteps. Perceiving in an instant that the disturbers of her peace were none other than her discarded lover and his attendants, the maiden fled away, beneath the forest shade, ever hearing behind her the steps of her pursuers, whom she could scarcely hope eventually to evade.

Their steps came nearer, hers lagged more wearily, till mindful of the aid that had never failed her in all the troubles and perplexities of her life, Frideswide sank for a moment on her knees to invoke the intercessions of her favourite Saints, S. Cecilia and S. Catherine. And in an instant, in swift response to her prayer, the maiden heard close behind her a cry of intense anguish. She glanced backwards; under the spreading trees, Algar, the prince of Mercia, stricken with sudden blindness, was groping miserably

in the unaccustomed darkness for someone to lead him by the hand.

The pursuit was ended; with bleeding feet Frideswide reached the river's bank, and lighting on a ford where the cattle were wont to cross to their daily pasture, sped painfully across, and in the safety of the woods beyond, offered her humble thanksgiving for her great deliverance.

Years had passed, when one summer's day, when the earth lay parched beneath the burning heat, Frideswide saw approaching her, led by the hand, a blind and prematurely aged man. In penitence he bowed before the Saint, and as he knelt confessed himself to be that prince, "his people's curse and bane," who in his thirst for vengeance had once pursued her with such mad persistency. Now, after long years, his passions subjugated by the Divine judgment that had overtaken him, he was come to her, in whom, if any help remained to him on earth, he trusted to find it.

Thrice did the Saint dip her fingers in the waters of the fountain at her side, thrice did she describe over the penitent the Sacred Sign, thrice did she invoke in his aid the Sacred Name, till

> "at her word
> Behold that sightless King arose, and saw,
> And rendered thanks to God."[1]

After some years spent in the seclusion of the forest, S. Frideswide, who had by this time collected round her a growing community of virgins, removed to

[1] These lines, as also the following, are taken from the Legend of S. Frideswide, in *The Legends of the Saxon Saints*, by Aubrey de Vere.

Oxford, where she founded a famous priory, which, as some believe, occupied the site of the present Christ Church Cathedral, and here at length she died, comforted the night before her departure by a vision of the two Saints who had befriended her throughout her life, and who were now come to bring her sweet promises of what should befall, in after years, the spot she loved.

> "Majestic piles (it was thus spake S. Cecilia)
> Shall rise by yonder Isis. . . .
> Upon their fronts, aloft in glory ranged,
> With face to East and cincture never loosed,
> Holding in spotless hand, not lamp alone,
> But lamp and censer both, and both alike
> From God's great Altar lighted."

S. Cecilia held her peace, and it was now S. Catherine who added her predictions to those of her companion Saint, revealing to the dying Frideswide how in time to come, together with the culture of the Sciences, should be blended that of these sister Arts—

> ". . . that bind the hearts of men
> To steadfast Truth, by Beauty's sinuous cords."

The vision faded, S. Frideswide passed to her rest, monasteries arose upon the soil that her feet had so often trod, and these in due course gave place to colleges, but still upon the walls of each were ranged in glorious array—fit warning to the students of that city over which S. Frideswide still presides—

> ". . . no ideal forms
> Craft unhistoric of some dreamer's brain,
> But life-like shapes of plain heroic men,
> Who in their day had fought the fight of Faith,
> Warriors and sages, poets, saints and kings,
> And earned their rest."

It is interesting to note that it is to the dread of sharing Algar's fate that tradition attributes the reluctance against entering Oxford that was for many centuries manifested by the Kings of England.

S. MILDRED

ABBESS *d. middle of 8th century*

S. Mildred, who was long regarded as one of the most influential English Saints, was the daughter of Prince Merewald of Mercia and of his wife S. Ermenburga, sometimes called Domneva, a sister of Egbert, King of Kent, who ascended the throne in the year 664.

Secretly pledged to chastity, though bound by no religious vows, S. Mildred was sent by her mother to be educated at the Convent of Chelles in France, where, however, trouble speedily befell her, since, as the old legend expresses it: "The devil, envying her happy progress, inflamed a very noble young gentleman and kinsman to the Lady Abbess to love her exceedingly and to desire her in marriage; and for the greater probation of her chastity, faith and patience, the Abbess herself, for her carnal kinsman's sake, both against her own purpose and vow, and of this holy virgin that had dedicated herself to God by purpose of perpetual chastity, persuaded her to assent to marry him that loved her so dearly." S. Mildred, on the plea that she had been sent to Chelles not to be married, but to be taught, firmly resisted first the counsels and then the commands of

her superior, who afterwards from threats proceeded to enforce her will by the most cruel means. On one occasion it is even related that she shut S. Mildred for three hours into a fiercely heated oven, but that when, at the end of that time, she proceeded to open the oven, wherein she expected to find only the ashes of her unfortunate victim, she found the latter absolutely uninjured and singing joyously, in tones of gratitude for this marvellous intervention of Providence, the words, "Lord, Thou hast examined me by fire, and yet no iniquity is found in me."

The Abbess, however, whom even so mighty a miracle did not suffice to divert from her evil purpose, continued to ill-treat S. Mildred to such an extent, "beating her and bouncing her beyond all measure, but without effect," that the distressed maiden at length discovered a means of sending to her mother a letter, accompanied by some of the locks torn by the infuriated Abbess from her head, which caused S. Ermenburga to send ships from England, wherein her daughter, having successfully eluded the watch of her persecutor, safely effected her escape to her native country.

At Ebbsfleet, where she landed, it is said that the youthful Saint found a great square stone, popularly known in later years as S. Mildred's Rock, miraculously prepared for her landing, which, as if endowed with the pliancy of wax, thenceforward preserved the mark of her welcome footprints, and which, though constantly removed, as constantly returned to its original position, until an oratory was built over it.

It would appear that immediately on her return to England S. Mildred entered the Convent of Menstrey in Thanet, which had been built there by her mother under the following circumstances:—

When Egbert, in the year 664, succeeded his uncle, Earconbert, upon the throne of Kent, he seems to have yielded largely to the evil influence of a certain Count Thunor, who was in the habit of constantly endeavouring to persuade his royal master that so long as his two young cousins, Ethelred and Ethelbright, were still alive, his own crown must necessarily remain in danger. Now it does not appear that Egbert ever gave his positive consent to the removal of his two young relatives, but yet, when in 668 they were murdered by this same Thunor, overcome by guilty remorse because he had not intervened to prevent a crime which he had well known to be in contemplation, he sent for his sister, Ermenburga, and offered her, by way of weregild—that is to say, the price of blood that the Saxon law demanded of all those who unlawfully took the lives of their fellow-men—as much land as she should desire. S. Ermenburga, in reply, claimed as weregild as much land as could be traversed by her tame doe in a single course—a space which amounted to some forty-eight ploughs of land, upon which the Saint, in the year 670, proceeded to found this same Convent of Menstrey to which S. Mildred now retired, and of which, though possibly only after the death of her husband, the mother herself became the first Abbess, a capacity in which she was subsequently succeeded by her daughter.

This monastery, together with all the nuns within its walls, was afterwards destroyed by fire during the Danish invasions.

Towards the middle of the eighth century S. Mildred, who had now for many years ruled her Convent of Menstrey with much sanctity and discretion, after suffering for many years from a lingering and painful malady, departed this life in peace, and was succeeded in her holy office by her aunt S. Eadburga, who is better known as having been in her younger days one of the English correspondents of S. Boniface.

A somewhat quaint legend relates that under the rule of this third saintly Abbess of Menstrey, a certain bellringer had inadvertently fallen asleep before the Altar, whereupon S. Mildred herself appeared to guard the sanctuary, and after dealing the fellow a sound box on the ears, bade him remember for the future "that this place was an oratory to pray in and not a dormitory to sleep in."

S. OSITHE

ABBESS AND MARTYR *d. circa* 870

Legend relates that one winter's day Osithe, the daughter of the Mercian prince, Frithwald, was dispatched by S. Edith, Abbess of Polesworth, to whose care the maiden had been committed by her parents, to carry a book to the cell of S. Modwena, who, as it appears, shared the responsibility of her education. Now in order to reach the dwelling of S. Modwena, it was necessary for Osithe to cross a

narrow bridge, beneath which the little stream, which trickled merrily in summer along its course, but which was now swollen by the winter rains into a roaring torrent, was swirling with terrific violence, and as it so chanced that on that particular day a strong wind was also blowing, the little maiden lost her footing and fell, with the book still in her hand, into the raging water.

Three days passed, during which, since S. Edith supposed her little pupil to be safe with S. Modwena, whilst the latter, who had never been informed of her coming, never imagined but that she was safe at Polesworth, no inquiry was made, but at the end of that time, S. Edith, wondering that Osithe did not return, herself visited S. Modwena, to learn to her dismay that the child had never reached her destination. The two Abbesses forthwith proceeded to follow the banks of the stream, and at length reached the little bridge, where, to their distress, they perceived, in the bed of the current, the form of their lost charge, who was still holding open in her hand the book entrusted to her care. Instantly the saintly women sank upon their knees in prayer, till at length S. Modwena, rising solemnly to her feet, thrice repeated in an authoritative tone, " Osithe, Osithe, Osithe, in the Name of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, come forth ! " whereupon the maiden, thrice repeating in reply the words, " Behold, I come," emerged safe and uninjured from the water, and returned with S. Edith to her Convent of Polesworth.

Now, S. Osithe, though she had been thus educated

in a convent, and had, in her own heart, dedicated herself to a life of virginity, had as yet made no religious profession, and for this reason, when it seemed good to her parents, to whom she was now restored, to wed her to Sighere, the joint king of Essex, the maiden, unable, as she would have wished, to protest against his offer, found herself constrained to consent to the marriage, which was in due course solemnized.

It would appear, however, that though married, S. Osithe still continued to pray that she might yet be enabled to preserve her vow of chastity, and for some days after her arrival at her husband's home, most probably in or near London, she successfully eluded his advances, until one day, when he had at last begun to reproach her with the manner of her conduct towards him, an excited cry from the palace gates, " The stag, my lord, the stag ! " distracted the King's attention, and departing with all haste he engaged, during the next four or five days, in the pursuit of the largest stag ever seen, whilst S. Osithe, who regarded this intervention as a direct response to her supplications, took advantage of his absence to become a cloistered nun.

It would certainly seem that in these very trying circumstances Sighere must have behaved with extreme forbearance and generosity, since he bestowed upon his wife a parcel of land at Chich in Essex, on which he himself built for her both a church and a convent, over which latter S. Osithe was duly appointed as the first Abbess.

Some years later, when the Danes, who were most

zealous in their persecution of all Christian communities, visited the Convent of Chich, their leader, impressed perhaps by her beauty, offered S. Osithe her life if she would openly renounce her Faith, which thing, however, the saintly Abbess steadfastly refused to do. The Danish leader, seeing therefore that he could prevail nothing, gave orders for her execution, but no sooner, so it is said, did S. Osithe's head touch the ground, than a healing fountain bubbled forth upon the spot where it had fallen, whilst the holy Martyr, raising her head, carried it in her hands to the door of the Abbey Church, which lay some three hundred yards away, in consequence of which miracle it was naturally inferred that, in direct opposition to the wishes of her relatives, who were most eager to bury her at Aylesbury, she desired to rest within the precincts of her own convent.

S. EDITH

NUN *d. September 16th*, 984

S. Edith of Wilton was the illegitimate daughter of King Edgar, by a beautiful nun, named Wilfrida, whom he had dragged from the cloister, but who, before the birth of her child, managed to escape from her royal lover and to return to the convent. It was therefore in the seclusion of Wilton that her daughter was born, and was there educated in an environment of sanctity and religion in all the learning of the times, and so readily did she respond to the careful instruction that she there received, and so

eagerly did she devote herself to the care of the poor and afflicted, that she was possessed of one solitary failing—the love of more costly attire than her profession seemed to justify. S. Ethelwold, Bishop of Winchester, so it is said, one day remonstrated with her for this weakness, whereupon the maiden, turning against the saintly prelate his own teaching, reminded him that God looks not upon the outward apparel, but upon the heart, and added discreetly, "Pride may exist beneath the garb of wretchedness, and a mind may be as pure beneath these silken garments as beneath your tattered furs"—an answer to which S. Ethelwold, realizing its wisdom, offered no reply.

Attracted by the personal charm and learning of this beautiful child of the cloister, King Edgar was eagerly desirous to detain her at his Court and there to arrange for her some brilliant marriage, but, in this, notwithstanding his daughter's taste for finery and display, he encountered her firm resistance and her earnest entreaties for the royal permission to take the veil. It may have been with some reluctance that King Edgar acceded to S. Edith's wishes, but however that may have been, he generously bestowed upon her, together with his consent, the dowry that he had intended to settle on her at her marriage, which she devoted entirely to the foundation of various religious houses and to the erection amongst others of a noble church at Wilton, consecrated by S. Dunstan in honour of S. Denis, of which all trace has now vanished.

Legend relates that when S. Dunstan was celebrating Mass, after the Service of Consecration was concluded,

his attendants noticed that his eyes were filled with tears, and anxiously inquired the cause of his distress.

"I weep," he replied mournfully, "because this starry gem shall ere long be taken from us into the Saints' country; for this wicked world is not worthy to enjoy the presence of so clear a light."

And it so happened that the prediction of the Archbishop was accurately fulfilled, for forty-two days later this youthful Saint—she was only twenty-three years of age—died on 16 September, 984, of a fever, and was buried in the Church of S. Denis, on the spot to which she had often pointed as her final resting-place.

PART II

An Alphabetical List of English Saints, wherewith is incorporated a more concise account of many holy men and women not included in the foregoing portion of this book.

S. Acca. Bishop (died 740).

The intimate friend of the Venerable Bede, and also of S. Wilfrid, whom he succeeded as Bishop of Hexham.

S. Adamnan. Monk (died 689).

See S. Ebba of Coldingham, Part I, p. 244.

S. Adelbert. Missionary (died *c.* 740).

A son of Edilwald, King of Deira and a disciple of S. Egbert in Ireland, who was later appointed Archdeacon of Utrecht by S. Willibrod.

S. Ælred. Abbot (died 1166).

See Part I, p. 203.

S. Aidan. Bishop (died 651).

See Part I, p. 51.

S. Alban. Protomartyr (died 304).

See Part I, p. 1.

S. Alcmund. King and Martyr (died *c.* 800).

A son of Alchred, King of Northumbria, this prince followed his father into exile among the Picts, where he became a convert to Christianity.

Weary of the oppressions of Eardulf, the usurper, his subjects, after his father's death, recalled Alcmund "not only for that the kingdom fell to him for heritage, but also for that he was full of grace and all good things." According to some writers, he fell in battle against the Danes, whilst others state that he was murdered at the instigation of Eardulf. But there is yet another old English legend which relates that some of the subjects of his more southerly dominions, feeling themselves too weak to cope against the tyrants who oppressed them, appealed in their hour of need to S. Alcmund, who recognized in their request a response to his frequent prayer that he might perish in a just quarrel and in aid of God's people. And so it befell that on the day of battle, though the tyrannical Dukes were slain and their victims were consequently relieved, S. Alcmund also lay dead upon the field, and was thenceforward regarded as a martyr both for God and for his country. He was buried at Lilleshall in Shropshire, but his remains were afterwards translated to Derby, where a church was dedicated in his honour.

S. ALDHELM. Bishop (died 709).

Related to the royal House of Wessex, and Monk and later Abbot of Malmesbury, S. Aldhelm was appointed on the death of Hedda, Bishop of Wessex, to the care of one portion of the divided diocese, thus becoming Bishop of Sherborne from 705–709. He was renowned not only for

his saintliness, but also for his scholarship, and was the first Englishman to publish books both in Latin prose and verse.

S. Alfreda. Recluse (died *c.* 834).

See S. Ethelbert, King and Martyr, Part II, p. 284.

S. Alnoth. Hermit (died early eighth century).

After holding for many years the post of steward to S. Werburgh on her estates at Weedon, S. Alnoth retired, on her death, to a secluded spot, where he was finally murdered by robbers.

S. Alphege. Archbishop (died 1012).

See Part I, p. 114.

S. Alphege the Bald. Archbishop (died 953).

The successor of S. Birnstan at Winchester, and uncle of S. Dunstan, over whose early life he exercised considerable influence.

S. Awdry.

See S. Etheldreda.

S. Bartholomew. Hermit (died 1193).

See Part I, p. 228.

S. Bathilde. Queen (died 680).

Of Saxon ancestry, S. Bathilde was removed as a child to France and was there sold as a slave into the household of Erchinwald, mayor of the palace. The King, Clovis II, impressed by her virtues and her graces, with the entire approbation of his nobles, married her in 649, and on his death left in her sole charge their three sons, Clothair III, Childeric II and Theodoric I. During her regency S. Bathilde left secular affairs mainly in the hands

of the various mayors of the palace, devoting herself more especially to ecclesiastical matters and to the relief of the poor, and more especially of slaves. When her son Clothair attained to his majority, she at once retired to the Convent of Chelles on the Marne, which she had already restored during her husband's lifetime, and where, after sharing the lot of the humblest nuns, after great suffering, long and patiently borne, she died in 680.

S. Beccelin. Hermit (died *c.* 800).

Apparently the same Beccelin or Bertelin who has already been referred to in the Life of S. Guthlac, Hermit, and who after the death of the latter is said to have retired to the seclusion of a little island on the river at Stafford, where he died.

S. Bede. Priest and Historian (died 735).

See Part I, p. 187.

S. Bega. Recluse (died middle seventh century).

An Irish princess, whom I have included here because her religious life is so entirely connected with the north of England. Betrothed, by her father, much against her will to a King of Norway, who was attracted by her marvellous beauty, S. Bega, desiring to devote herself to an ascetic life, fled from the palace on the eve of the wedding, taking with her the bracelet which she was said to have received at the hands of an angel in token of our Lord's acceptance of her betrothal to Himself. She made her way to the seashore, whence, failing to find a vessel, she is said to have crossed

the Irish Channel on a sod of turf and to have landed on the rocks near Copeland, where S. Bees College now stands. Here she spent many years in retirement and died towards the middle of the seventh century. This Saint is often confounded both with S. Heiu, the first Northumbrian nun and the founder of the Convent of Hartlepool, and also with the saintly woman Bega, referred to by the Venerable Bede in his account of S. Hilda.

S. Bennet Biscop. Abbot (died 690).

See Part I, p. 180.

S. Birnstan or Brynstan. Bishop (died 934).

A holy Bishop of Winchester from 932–934, whose memory, notwithstanding his many virtues, seems to have become speedily obliterated, since to his successor, S. Ethelwold, there appeared in a vision three prelates, of whom he in the centre spake as follows: "I am Birnstan, former Bishop of this city: he on my right is Birinus, the Apostle of Wessex: he on my left is Swithin, the special patron of this city. Be assured that as you behold me in their company here on earth, so am I in Heaven associated with them in glory. Why then should I, who am thus glorified among the heavenly spirits, be defrauded by mortal men of the honour that by right appertains to me?" It is scarcely necessary to add that from that day forward S. Birnstan was revered at Winchester with all the honour that he claimed.

S. Boniface. Apostle and Martyr (died 755).

See Part I, p. 168.

S. Bosa. Bishop (died 705).

A Monk of S. Hilda's Monastery at Whitby, who was consecrated Bishop of York during the first banishment of S. Wilfrid, in 678, but who retired, on the return of that Saint, into monastic seclusion. When S. Wilfrid was again expelled, S. Bosa returned to York and remained there till his death in 705, when he was succeeded by S. John of Beverley.

S. Botulph. Abbot (died 655).

This Saint, together with his brother Adulph, sought in Belgium a religious house in which to retire from the world. Adulph ultimately became Bishop of Maestricht, whilst S. Botulph, returning to England, obtained a grant of land from Ethelmund, King of the South Angles, on which to found the Monastery of Ikanho—a monastery which was so entirely destroyed by the Danes that its very site is now uncertain—and where, as Abbot, he won, by his humility and gentleness, the love and respect of the whole community, to whom he set so perfect an example. S. Botulph died in the year 655.

S. Brithwald. Archbishop (died 731).

A saintly Abbot of Glastonbury, who resigned this dignity to retire to Reculver, near the Isle of Thanet, in order that he might profit by the instructions of S. Theodore of Canterbury. He was himself consecrated Archbishop in the year 692 and occupied the See of Canterbury till his death in 731.

S. Burchard. Missionary Bishop (died 752).

A fellow-labourer with S. Boniface, this Saint became after a time the first Bishop of Würzburg, till in his old age he resigned his bishopric and retired to Hohenburg, where he spent his remaining years in watching and prayer.

S. Cedd. Bishop (died soon after 664).

See Part I, p. 56.

S. Cædmon. Monk (died latter half of seventh century).

See Part I, p. 184.

S. Ceolfrid. Abbot (died 716).

A kinsman of S. Bennet Biscop, to whom reference has already been made in the life of that Saint. After the death of S. Bennet, he ruled for twenty-seven years over the two monasteries of Wearmouth and of Jarrow, till, in his old age, after resigning this heavy charge, he attempted a pilgrimage to Rome, during which, even when he found himself compelled by weakness to exchange his horse for a litter, he managed to adhere, until three days before his death, to his daily custom of singing Mass and of twice reciting the whole Psalter. He died at Langres in 716, whence his remains were later transferred to his own monastery, and finally, for protection against the Danish invaders, to the Abbey of Glastonbury.

S. Ceolwulf. King and Monk (died middle of eighth century).

The Northumbrian King to whom the Venerable Bede dedicated his Ecclesiastical History,

and who, in the year 737, resigned his kingdom to become a monk of Glastonbury.

S. CHAD. Bishop (died 673).

See Part I, p. 60.

S. CLAIR. Martyr (died *c.* 894).

An English Saint who crossed to Normandy, where, after leading for some years an eremitical life, he placed himself under the direction of Odobert, Abbot of Maduin. In order to evade, in his humility, the numerous visitors attracted to that monastery by the fame of his sanctity, S. Clair afterwards sought permission to retire to a more secluded house, where he was ultimately murdered at the instigation of a lady who had fallen in love with him, and who, angered by his rejection of her advances, bribed two ruffians to assassinate him.

S. CUTHBERT. Bishop (died 687).

See Part I, p. 64.

S. CUTHBURGA. Queen and Abbess (died *c.* 720).

A princess of the royal House of Wessex, S. Cuthburga married Aldfrith, King of Northumbria. Later, with the consent of her husband, in company with her sister, Cwenburga, she took the veil at the famous Convent of Barking, whence, subsequently, owing to their saintly reputation, these two sisters were selected by Ina, King of Wessex, to found the Convent of Wimborne, over which S. Cuthburga was appointed as the first Abbess. Tender and sparing towards all save herself, S. Cuthburga died, after long suffering, patiently borne, on 31 August, about the year 720.

S. CUTHMAN. Confessor (died eighth century).

A shepherd lad, who, while tending his father's sheep, found much time for devotion and meditation as well as for the punctual performance of his duties. On his father's death he devoted all his slender savings to the support of his aged and infirm mother, till, finding after a long search a situation at Stening on the Bramber in Sussex, he migrated thither, and after building a hut for himself and his mother, proceeded to dig the foundations of a church with such zeal that all the villagers, fired by his enthusiasm, flocked to his aid.

S. DANIEL. Bishop (died 745).

When, on the death of Hedda, the diocese of Wessex was divided in two portions, this S. Daniel was appointed to the See of Winchester, and S. Aldhelm to that of Sherborne. S. Daniel retired in his older days to the Monastery of Malmesbury, where he died in 745.

S. DEUSDEDIT. Archbishop (died 664).

A native of Wessex, who on his consecration as first Anglo-Saxon Archbishop of Canterbury, exchanged his native name of Frithona for the Latin one of Deusdedit (the gift of God), by which he is usually known. After labouring with devotion and success in his archiepiscopal office he died of the great pestilence that visited this country in 664, shortly after the great Synod of Whitby that was held in that same year.

S. DUNSTAN. Archbishop (died 988).

See Part I, p. 99.

S. EADBERT. Bishop (died *c.* 698).

This holy man, famed for his intimate knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, was appointed successor to S. Cuthbert at Lindisfarne. Eleven years after his consecration, while Eadbert was observing his Lenten retreat at Farne, his monks, with his approval, opened S. Cuthbert's tomb, with the intention of replacing the relics in a new coffin, but, to their astonishment, found both the remains and the vestments in which they were robed in a state of perfect preservation. This miracle was at once reported to the Bishop, who gave orders that the remains of S. Cuthbert should be translated, in fresh vestments, to a place of greater honour, adding to his instructions the prediction that the coffin, thus sanctified, would not long remain empty. Very shortly afterwards Eadbert himself fell sick, and dying on the 6 May following, was himself laid to rest in this very grave.

S. EADBURGA or EDBURGA. Abbess (died 759).

A member of the royal House of Wessex and a woman of recognized learning and ability, it is known that S. Eadburga was at one time a correspondent of S. Boniface, though her letters have unfortunately been destroyed. She subsequently succeeded S. Mildred as Abbess of Menstrey in Thanet.

S. EANFLEDA. Abbess (died 713).

It has already been recorded in the life of S. Edwin, King and martyr, how, while still a

heathen, he vowed to permit the baptism of his infant daughter, Eanfleda, who was born on Easter Day, 626, if he might perchance be healed of the poisoned wound received at the hand of Quichelm's paid assassin and might gain the victory over his treacherous enemy. This child, Eanfleda, who was baptized by S. Paulinus at the following Whitsuntide, was removed by her mother, Ethelburga, after the death of her father in 633 to Kent, and received her education partly at the Court of her uncle, Eadbald, and partly at the convent which her mother founded at Liming.

In 642 she married her cousin Oswy, King of Northumbria, who was later induced, through her saintly influence, to found the Monastery of Gilling in expiation of the murder of his cousin S. Oswin, King of Deira, to whom he had, of his own free will, in 644, conceded a portion of his Northumbrian dominions. S. Eanfleda, owing to her Kentish education, was one of the chief supporters of S. Wilfrid in the many controversies in which that celebrated prelate was involved. After her husband's death, which occurred in 670, she retired to Whitby, and ended her life as a nun, under the rule of her daughter, S. Elfleda.

S. Eanswide. Abbess (died *c.* 640).

This saintly daughter of King Eadbald, who succeeded S. Ethelbert, first Christian King of the English on the throne of Kent, manifested from her childhood a vocation for the religious

life, and, eschewing all offers of marriage, withdrew, while still very young, to a lonely spot near Folkestone, where her father had erected a church and convent for herself and her companions, and where, it is said, when water was found to be lacking, she dug a channel with the end of her crosier and thus forced the water to run uphill.

Soon after her death, which occurred whilst she was still young, her body was removed to Folkestone, on account of the rapid encroachment of the waves, which before long completely obliterated all traces of her convent.

S. Earconwald. Bishop (died late seventh century). See Part I, p. 73.

S. Eata. Bishop (died 685).

This Saint was one of the twelve Northumbrian youths whom S. Aidan, on his arrival in that kingdom, selected in order that he might train them under his personal supervision. He afterwards became Abbot of Melrose, in which office he had under him successively as Priors, S. Boisil (Boswell) and S. Cuthbert. Bishop Colman, on his retirement from Lindisfarne, after the Synod of Whitby, committed the care of his monastery to S. Eata of Melrose. During the banishment of S. Wilfrid this man, "who excelled all men living in meekness and in Christian sincerity," was consecrated Bishop of Bernicia, which included both Hexham and Lindisfarne, till, when three years later Tunbert was appointed to Hex-

ham, S. Eata removed entirely to Lindisfarne. Later, after the deposition of Tunbert, he abandoned Lindisfarne to S. Cuthbert, and once more fixed his see at Hexham, where he died in 685.

S. Ebba. Abbess (died 683).

See Part I, p. 244.

S. Ebba, Abbess, and her companion martyrs (died *c.* 870).

See Part I, p. 248.

S. Edburga. Virgin (died 960).

It is related of S. Edburga, who was the daughter of King Edward the Elder, that whilst yet a child, her father set before her, on the one hand a set of the most costly jewels, and on the other a religious habit, whereupon, with contempt, the little girl, who as some say was then only three years of age, rejecting the emblems of temporal grandeur, joyfully accepted the garb of humility and with it her vocation. She became a nun at Winchester, where, after a holy life, she died of a fever in the year 960.

S. Edelwald. Hermit (died 700).

S. Edelwald, formerly a monk of Ripon, succeeded in 687 to S. Cuthbert's cell on the holy island of Farne, where in his solitude he was frequently consoled by angelic messages, of which it is said that he only once, owing to his profound humility, permitted the least mention to escape his lips. It is related by one Gudfrid, afterwards Abbot of Lindisfarne, that on one occasion he

and two companions, after visiting the holy anchorite, were overtaken on their return journey by a terrific storm, which threatened to capsize their little boat. For a long while they struggled vainly against the raging wind and towering waves, till at length, in their despair, they glanced behind them and there beheld S. Edelwald, who, emerging from his hut and observing their distress, had at that very moment sunk upon his knees in prayer for their preservation. Instantly, in response to the intercessions of the Saint, the sea grew calm, the storm abated, and a fair wind carried their tiny craft safe to harbour. S. Edelwald died in the year 700.

S. EDILBURGA. Abbess (died towards end of seventh century.

See Part I, p. 237.

S. EDITH (1). Abbess (died 871).

The daughter of King Egbert (828–836) and the sister of Ethelwulf, who granted to S. Modwena the town of Polesworth in Warwickshire for the foundation of a convent. This S. Edith became first Abbess of this new community and included amongst her pupils the famous S. Osithe, whose history has already been given in Part I.

S. EDITH (2). Queen and Nun (tenth century).

This second S. Edith was apparently the eldest daughter of Edward the Elder, and, much against her will, was forced by her brother Athelstan into a marriage with Sithric, the Danish King of

Northumbria. Though temporarily converted to Christianity by the influence of his wife, it is said that Sithric soon wearied of the restraints of his new religion, and that reverting to his heathen deities, he divorced his Queen, who at once retired as a nun to the Convent of Polesworth, of which the S. Edith previously mentioned was the first Abbess.

S. Edith of Wilton (3). Virgin (died 984).
See Part I, p. 263.

S. Edmund. King and Martyr (died 870).
See Part I, p. 34.

S. Edmund Rich. Archbishop (died 1242).
See Part I, p. 145.

S. Edward. King and Martyr (died 979).
See Part I, p. 38.

S. Edward. King and Confessor (died 1066).
See Part I, p. 40.

S. Edwold. Hermit (ninth century).

A brother of King Edmund the martyr, who, refusing the succession, withdrew to the neighbourhood of Shaftesbury, where he lived as a recluse until his death, which occurred towards the end of the ninth century.

S. Egbert. Priest (died 729).
See Part I, p. 160.

S. Egelwin. Abbot.

A member of the royal family of Wessex and formerly the patron of Athelney in Somerset.

S. Elfleda. Abbess (died *c.* 713).

The story of the dedication to a religious life of this daughter of King Oswy of Northumbria and of his wife S. Eanfleda will be found in the life of S. Hilda, whom she afterwards succeeded as Abbess of Whitby. See Part I, p. 240.

S. Ercongota. Abbess (died 700).

The daughter of Earconbert, King of Kent, and of his wife S. Sexburga, S. Ercongota was the niece of S. Ethelburga, with whom her name is usually coupled and whom she accompanied to the Convent of Faremoutier, founded by S. Fara in the Forest of Brie, where she apparently succeeded her as Abbess. When the time of her departure from this world was near at hand, S. Ercongota was informed of its approach by the vision of a troop of white-robed men, who entered the convent and who replied to those who inquired as to their needs, that they were come to claim the golden medal that had come from Kent. As the day broke on the following morning, S. Ercongota passed to her rest and, at that same hour, certain of the monks in the adjoining buildings heard as it were a sound of a vast multitude that entered the convent, and beheld also a marvellous column of light, through which the soul of this most saintly Abbess ascended heavenwards amid the harmony of the celestial choirs.

S. ERMENBURGA. Queen and Abbess (seventh century).

The wife of Merewald, a Mercian Prince, and mother of S. Mildred, S. Milburga and S. Mildgithe, the chief points of whose history will be found in the life of S. Mildred, Part I, p. 257.

S. ERMENILDA. Queen and Abbess (died latter part of seventh century).

This Saint, who was the daughter of Earconbert, King of Kent, and wife of Wulfhere, King of Mercia, was the mother of the youthful martyrs, S. Wulfhad and S. Ruffin, whose history has already been included in that of their elder sister, S. Werburgh.

On the death of her husband, S. Ermenilda renounced the world and took the veil at the Convent of Sheppey, over which her mother, S. Sexburga, then presided. Later she succeeded that Saint as Abbess, first of Sheppey and afterwards of Ely.

S. ESKILL. Missionary Bishop and Martyr (eleventh century).

A kinsman of S. Sigefrid, S. Eskill followed that Saint to Sweden, where as Bishop of Nordhan's Kogh he converted many both by his example and by his teaching. When, however, during a temporary secession from the Faith, consequent on political troubles, heathen customs were once more restored among the people, the Saint, with his clergy, entered a vigorous protest against a certain pagan festival that was appointed

to be held at Strengis. Finding his words of no avail, S. Eskill appealed to Heaven for a sign and in response a terrific storm of hail and thunder descended upon the astonished infidels, who, unfortunately attributing this miracle to an exercise of magical arts, with the King's consent, stoned S. Eskill to death.

S. ETHELBERT. First Christian King (died 616).

See Part I, p. 9.

S. ETHELBERT. King and Martyr (died 793).

After a childhood conspicuous for its sanctity, this Saint succeeded his father, while still very young, to the throne of East Anglia. After a reign of forty-four years, during which his practical illustration of the words that were frequently on his lips: "The higher the station of the man, the more humble and the more benevolent should be his life," had won for him the love and veneration of his subjects, he acceded, notwithstanding his own preference for a celibate life, to their desire for an heir to the kingdom, and having heard much of the sanctity of Alfreda, the daughter of Offa, King of Mercia, he visited that King's Court, near Hereford, to press his suit. Here, however, after a cordial reception, at the instigation of Quendreda, Offa's wife, who desired the annexation of the Kingdom of East Anglia, he was foully murdered by Grimbert, one of the King's officers, in the year 793, and secretly buried at Marden, till a pillar of light which presided by night over the martyr's grave caused his remains to be re-

moved to the church at Hereford. After this dastardly murder of her affianced husband, S. Alfreda retired to S. Guthlac's convent in the Fens, and there ended her days as a recluse; Quendreda, tortured by remorse, died miserably within three months of her crime; Offa, in expiation of his wife's guilt, undertook a pilgrimage to Rome, where he founded a school for English students; whilst Egfrith, his only son, died after a very brief reign, and thus, within a short space, the crown of Mercia had passed entirely to the collateral branch of the descendants of King Penda.

S. ETHELBURGA. Abbess (seventh century).

The daughter of Anna, King of East Anglia, S. Ethelburga, the sister of S. Etheldreda and S. Sexburga, retired to the Convent of Faremoutier in Brie, of which, as has already been mentioned in the account of her niece, S. Ercongota, she in due course became Abbess.

S. ETHELDREDA (AWDRY). Queen and Abbess (died 679).

See Part I, p. 232.

SS. ETHELRED and ETHELBRIGHT. Martyrs (died *c.* 668).

See Life of S. Mildred, Part I, p. 257.

S. ETHELWOLD. Bishop (died 984).

See Part I, p. 96.

SS. EWALD. Missionaries and Martyrs (died 695).

See Part I, p. 159.

S. Fremund. Hermit and Martyr (died 862).

This Saint, who was of royal birth, is said to have abandoned the world in his youth and to have lived the life of a recluse upon an island on the Severn, till, recalled, as some say, to the assistance of his native country against the Danes, he perished in its defence, in the year 862.

S. Frideswide. Abbess (died 735).

See Part I, p. 253.

S. Frithstan. Bishop (died 932).

A man of remarkable piety, whom Archbishop Phlegmund consecrated Bishop of Winchester, in the year 908. It is said that he resigned his See in the year 931, consecrated his successor and died in the following year, 932.

S. Gilbert. Abbot (died 1189).

See Part I, p. 207.

S. Godrick. Hermit (died 1170).

See Part I, p. 225.

S. Guthlac. Hermit (died 714).

See Part I, p. 215.

S. Hedda. Bishop (died 705).

A monk in the Monastery of S. Hilda at Whitby, S. Hedda became later Bishop of the West Saxons, holding his See first at Dorchester (Oxon.), and later at Winchester. "A good and just man, who both by his life and doctrine worthily discharged his episcopal office, instructed rather by the love of virtue and of piety engrafted in his

soul, than by study or learning," such is the testimony of the Venerable Bede concerning this saintly Prelate.

S. Heiu or Heyne. Abbess, seventh century.

S. Heiu, the first Northumbrian nun, was consecrated by S. Aidan and founded later the Convent of Hartlepool. Afterwards, resigning her high office to S. Hilda, she retired to Tadcaster (then Calcaria), where she died.

S. Helena. Empress (died 326).

See Part I, p. 5.

S. Herbert. Hermit (died 687).

See Part I, p. 213.

S. Hereswithe. Queen and Nun (died *c.* 850).

The daughter of Hereric, nephew of S. Edwin and the sister of the great S. Hilda of Whitby, this Saint appears to have married one of the East Anglian Kings, presumably Ethelhere, the brother and successor of King Anna. After her husband's death, she took the veil at the Convent of Chelles, not very far from Paris, which was about this very time restored and re-endowed by S. Bathilde, where she also died.

S. Hilda. Abbess (died 680).

See Part I, p. 240.

S. Hildelid. Abbess (died *c.* 720).

One of the first Anglo-Saxon princesses who, owing to the lack in those days of English communities for women, withdrew to France, in order to take the veil, but who was recalled thence by

S. Earconwald, who committed to her instruction his sister, S. Edilburga, whom he proposed to appoint Abbess of his newly founded convent at Barking. On the death of S. Edilburga, S. Hildelid succeeded her as second Abbess of Barking, where S. Cuthburga of Wimborne was amongst her pupils.

S. Hugh. Child Martyr (died 1255).

S. Hugh of Lincoln was a child of only eight years of age, who was captured by the Jews of that city, who, after keeping him in custody for ten days, executed upon him all the incidents of the Passion, and afterwards buried him secretly. The mother, when she had at length discovered that her son had last been seen with Jewish children, traced the house where this crime had been committed, and in punishment thereof, by order of Henry III, its owner, together with eighteen other participators in his evil deed, suffered public execution. The youthful martyr was buried in Lincoln Cathedral.

S. John of Beverley. Bishop (died 721).

See Part I, p. 89.

S. John of Bridlington. Prior (died 1379).

We are told that S. John, who was born of pious parents near Bridlington, was educated at Oxford, where, though naturally quick-tempered, he won for himself universal admiration by his meekness and self-control, as also by his industrious study, and that on his return home, finding all secular occupations distasteful, he assumed the

habit of the Canons Regular of S. Austin in his native place and became successively precentor, almoner, and prior. The father of all who turned to him for aid, whether bodily or spiritual, he practised towards himself the most rigid austerities, in so much that some expressed their amazement that he did not adopt some sterner rule than that of the Canons Regular. To these persons S. John, with profound humility, replied that in every Order that member who lives up to the highest standard of his rule may be a Saint, but that, as regarded himself, he felt that he was so imperfect that it would be sheer presumption to take upon himself higher responsibilities. He died at Bridlington in the year 1379.

S. KENELM. King and Martyr (died 820).

The only son and heir of Cenwulf, King of Mercia, whose father at his death, which occurred when Kenelm was only seven, confided him to the care of his sister Quendreda. The latter, in her desire to usurp her brother's crown, bribed his attendant, Ascobert, by the prospect of sharing the throne, to murder his royal charge. His first attempt was frustrated by a miracle, but the treacherous servant finally led the young King to the Valley of Clent, where he carried his crime to a successful issue, though the pillar of light which presided over the grave which he had secretly prepared for his victim, subsequently revealed the murder and prevailed to frustrate the ultimate object of the two conspirators.

S. KYNEBURGA. Queen and Abbess (died 680).

This Saint was the eldest daughter of Penda, the great pagan King of Mercia. Whether she became a Christian before her marriage with Alchfrith, the son of Oswy, King of Northumbria, is apparently uncertain, but her conversion would certainly have been a primary condition of the marriage, which formed one of the terms of the treaty arranged by King Oswy, after the defeat of Penda in 651. In any case she appears to have embraced her new religion with such fervour as, with Alchfrith's consent, to have ruled her house in such manner that it resembled rather a monastery than a Court, and on her husband's death she took the veil at Dormundcaster (Caistor), where she later became Abbess and died in the year 680.

S. KYNESWIDE. Queen and Nun (died late seventh century).

A daughter, like the above, of Penda, King of Mercia, after whose death, in 655, being still very young, she was educated at Dormundcaster. Later she married Offa, King of East Anglia, who in 709, with his wife's consent, started for Rome in company with S. Egwin of Worcester and Kenred, King of Mercia, and there ended his days as a monk, whilst Kyneswide returned to Dormundcaster, where she became a nun.

S. KYNEDRIDE. Nun (died late seventh century).

Some authorities include among the Saints the name of a third sister of S. Kyneburga and

S. Kyneswide : others omit the name, in the belief that it has been erroneously attached to one of the above Saints.

S. Lebwin. Missionary Priest (died end of eighth century).

An Anglo-Saxon, who, after his ordination as priest, went to preach the Gospel in the Netherlands, and there laboured with unremitting zeal and devotion till his death, towards the close of the eighth century. It is related that on the occasion of a great pagan festival held by the Saxons on the banks of the River Weser, he openly denounced the idolatrous worship that was there in process, and solemnly predicted that if the inhabitants would not renounce them and embrace the true Faith, a powerful King would very shortly deprive them of their liberty—a prediction that was fully verified within a few years in their defeat by Charlemagne. Under Divine protection, S. Lebwin then passed unharmed through the indignant crowd that was preparing to slay him as the enemy of its country's gods. He died towards the end of the eighth century.

S. Lioba. Abbess (died *c.* 779).

S. Lioba, " the greatly beloved," was a child of promise, born to her parents in their old age, and in accordance with her mother's dream that she had given birth to a church bell, which rang as she held it in her hand, was consecrated, from her childhood, to religion. She became a nun at

Wimborne, under S. Tetta, and as a kinswoman of S. Boniface was one of those whom in 748 he especially invited from that convent to Germany, to assist him in his missionary labours. Here, "angelical in countenance, cheerful in speech, admirable in her wit, excellent in counsel, patient in bearing crosses, and boundless in charity," she ruled for many years over a large community at Bischofsheim, training her nuns even more by her example than by her teaching, till in her old age she retired to the seclusion of Schönersheim, where she soon afterwards died.

S. Lullus. Missionary Archbishop (died 787).

A monk of Malmesbury, who followed S. Boniface to Germany and who became his coadjutor and successor in the Archbishopric of Mainz. After many years of devoted service he retired in his old age to a monastery and died there in 787.

S. Marchelm. Missionary (died late eighth century).

A disciple of S. Willibrod and a companion of S. Lebwin, whom he accompanied in his missionary journeys in the Netherlands.

S. Milburga. Abbess (died 722).

S. Milburga was the eldest daughter of Merewald, Prince of Mercia, and of his wife S. Ermenburga. Devoting herself from her childhood to religion, this Saint was consecrated by S. Theodore as Abbess of Wenlock, where she died in the year 722, after having especially commended to the observance of her community those two Beatitudes which commence respectively:

" Blessed are the pure in heart," and " Blessed are the Peacemakers."

S. Mildred. Abbess (died middle of eighth century).
See Part I, p. 257.

S. Milgithe (Milwyde). Nun (died early eighth century).

A sister of the two foregoing Saints, who likewise renounced the world in order to become a nun at the convent founded at Eastrey, near Canterbury, by King Egbert.

S. Neot. Hermit (died 877).
See Part I, p. 220.

S. Osithe. Abbess (died *c.* 870).
See Part I, p. 260.

S. Oswald. King and Martyr (died 642).
See Part I, p. 24.

S. Oswin. King and Martyr (died 651).
See Part I, p. 30.

S. Richard. King and Monk (died 722).
See Part I, p. 173.

S. Richard. Bishop (died 1253).
See Part I, p. 153.

S. Richard Rolle. Hermit (died 1349).

A hermit who had his cell at Hampole, four miles from Doncaster, where, after a life famous for learning and sanctity, he died in the year 1349.

S. Robert. Abbot (died 1159).
See Part I, p. 197.

S. Ruffin. Martyr (died *c.* 674).
See S. Werburgh, Part I, p. 248.

S. Rumwold. Missionary and Martyr (died 775).

Apparently an Anglo-Saxon Saint who, after practising the most rigid austerities in this country, became a missionary in Brabant. During one of those retreats in which he loved to exercise himself in discipline and meditation, S. Rumwold was assaulted by two of his converts, whom he had previously reproved for their evil ways, and his body flung for concealment into the river, where it was afterwards revealed by a mysterious light from heaven and buried with due honour at Mechlin by his friend and patron, Count Ado.

S. Rumwold. Child Saint (died seventh century).

This precocious infant, who died, it is said, at the age of three days, after evincing the most marvellous signs of sanctity, and was buried at Brackley in Northamptonshire, was according to some authorities the son of Alchfrith, King of Northumbria, and his wife, S. Kyneburga.

S. Sebba. King and Monk (died 697).

In the year 664, when Sighere, the son of Sigbert the Little, and Sebba, the son of Saeward, each governed respectively a portion of the kingdom of Wessex, under the sovereignty of Wulfhere, King of Mercia, their provinces were visited by a terrible pestilence which caused Sighere and his people to revert to the worship of their former idols, "as if," writes the Venerable Bede, "they hoped that these would perchance save them from the mortality," whereas Sebba and his subjects loyally adhered to the Christian Faith.

Even in the early days of his reign Sebba would willingly have exchanged his crown for a religious habit, but it was only in the year 697, when he was already stricken with mortal sickness, that he obtained his wife's consent to this course of action, and under the direction of Waldhere, Bishop of London, for the few days that remained to him, embraced the religious life. Fearing lest any unbecoming words might, in his mortal agony, escape his lips, S. Sebba obtained from the Bishop a promise that only he and two chosen attendants should minister to him in his last hours, but, to relieve him of any such dread, there was vouchsafed to the dying King a vision of three men in shining apparel, who promised him that three days hence his soul should depart from the body without any pain or suffering. A few days later S. Sebba, as these mysterious visitants had thus foretold, peacefully departed this life in the year 697.

S. SEXBURGA. Abbess (died late seventh century).

A daughter of Anna, King of East Anglia, S. Sexburga married Earconbert, King of Kent, after whose death in 664 she reigned as regent, until her son Egbert was of sufficient age to govern for himself; she then gathered round her a band of seventy-four nuns and retired with them to the convent that she had already founded, during her husband's lifetime, at Sheppey. Attracted, however, by the greater fame of the monastery founded by S. Etheldreda at Ely, she committed

her convent at Sheppey to the care of her daughter, S. Ermenilda, and submitted herself in all humility to the rule of her more famous sister, whom she afterwards succeeded as Abbess of Ely.

S. SIGEFRID. Apostle of Sweden (died *c.* 1002).

It was in the latter part of the tenth century that S. Sigefrid, who appears to have been born in the North of England, set forth upon his missionary enterprise to reconvert Sweden, which, since its former conversion by S. Ansgar in the ninth century, had relapsed into heathenism. Accompanied by his three nephews, Unaman, Sunaman, and Wiaman, he landed at Wexio, where, during the temporary absence of King Olaf, who according to some accounts had invited him from England to instruct his subjects, the little band were carefully observed by the advisers of that future royal Saint, who reported to their master that they had seen an old man, standing before the Table of his Religion, who elevated above his head a most beautiful Child, Who smiled sweetly down upon him. Delighted with all that he had heard, King Olaf sent for S. Sigefrid and, after having been admitted, together with his Queen and many others, to Holy Baptism, did his utmost to assist the Saint and his colleagues in the conversion of the Gothic nation. The efforts of S. Sigefrid were, however, destined to be marred by a terrible tragedy, since on one occasion, when the saintly Bishop was himself absent from Wexio, the heathen population of that city, partly in the

hope of plunder and partly in their hatred of a religion that threatened to overcome their ancient worship, murdered his three nephews and concealed the bodies of the martyrs in a forest, whence they were recovered by S. Sigefrid through the revelation of an Angel. Notwithstanding this personal grief, however, S. Sigefrid laboured on amongst his converts, though apparently with less success than he undoubtedly deserved, till about the year 1002, when he died and was buried in his cathedral Church of Wexio.

S. Simon Stock. Carmelite (died 1265).

This thirteenth-century Saint owes his name to the fact that, as a boy of twelve, he renounced the world and took up his abode in the hollow of a tree, where for many years he mortified his flesh by severe fasting and discipline. He attached himself later to the Carmelite friars, who had recently settled in England, and rose amongst them to such high repute that in the year 1245, when the first Carmelite Chapter was held at Aylesford, he was appointed General of the Order, which increased largely under his direction. S. Simon died at Boulogne in his hundredth year in 1265.

S. Stephen Harding. Abbot (died 1134).

See Part I, p. 189.

S. Swithin. Bishop (died 862).

See Part I, p. 93.

S. Tetta. Abbess, eighth century.

It was to S. Tetta, a daughter of the Royal House of Wessex, and Abbess of the famous Convent of Wimborne, that S. Boniface appealed for nuns, who should aid him in the conversion of the German nation. Amongst the notable saints trained under her admirable and most prudent rule were S. Walburga, S. Lioba and S. Theckla.

S. Theckla. Abbess (eighth century).

This Saint, one of the nuns educated at Wimborne under the guidance of the saintly Abbess Tetta, was sent to the assistance of S. Boniface, under whom she subsequently became second Abbess of Kitzingen.

S. Thomas. Archbishop and Martyr (died 1170).

See Part I, p. 132.

S. Thomas Cantilupe. Bishop (died 1282).

S. Thomas of Cantilupe, of whom it had been prophetically foretold before his birth that he should become "a notable soldier of the Cross," was the son of William, Lord Cantilupe, one of the most loyal supporters of the young King, Henry III, against the rebel barons who strove to set Prince Louis (Louis VIII), the son of Philip II of France, upon the throne of England.

After studying alternately at Oxford and in Paris, he became Chancellor of the University of Oxford, an office which he fulfilled with such merit that he was later, though sorely against his will, appointed by King Henry to be Lord High Chan-

cellor of the Kingdom. It was not till the accession of Edward I, in 1272, that he was at length enabled to divest himself of the exalted office which was so distasteful to him, but which he had filled with prudence, courage, and the most scrupulous justice, and at the age of fifty-four to retire once more to his beloved University. But it was only a brief respite, since in the year 1275 S. Thomas was unanimously elected, owing to his eminent virtues, to the See of Hereford, where he found himself speedily involved in serious controversies with the temporal lords, and notably with Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, who would fain have usurped the patrimony of the Church. But this was not to prove the limit of his troubles, since in the year 1282, in consequence of his defence of a subordinate against the ruling of Archbishop Peckham, S. Thomas Cantilupe found himself, after a stern reprimand, obliged to undertake a journey to Rome to appeal to Martin V against the ban of excommunication with which he was threatened. Having accomplished his object with success, the saintly Bishop set out on his return to England, but his health, already undermined by the unwonted fatigues of the outward journey and by the anxieties that he had recently undergone, suddenly gave way on his arrival at Montefiascone, where he died at the age of sixty on 25 August, 1282. In 1349 his relics, a part of which had been translated in 1287 to a magnificent shrine in the northern transept of his own cathedral,

were carried in solemn procession through the city of Hereford, in the belief that the Black Death, which was at that time devastating the country at large, must needs be held at bay by their inherent virtue.

S. Tibba. Abbess (seventh century).

A relative of S. Kyneburga and S. Kyneswide, S. Tibba appears to have been Abbess of a community at Ryhall, not far from Dormundcaster, where these two Saints had found a refuge from the world.

S. Torchgyth. Nun (seventh century).

See S. Edilburga, Part I, p. 237).

S. Ulrick. Hermit (died 1154).

S. Ulrick was a priest who, after devoting a considerable portion of his time and energies to sport, suddenly changed his mode of life and retired as a recluse to Haselbury, where he earned for himself a high reputation for sanctity among the surrounding districts. He died at Haselbury in 1154.

S. Vega (Pega). Recluse (died *c.* 719).

The sister of S. Guthlac of the Fens, in whose life mention has already been made of her, this Saint lived for many years the life of a recluse at some little distance from her brother's retreat at Croyland. After his death she visited Rome and died there about the year 719.

S. Walburga. Missionary Abbess (died 780).

See Part I, p. 173.

S. WALSTAN. Local Saint (died 1016).

This Norfolk Saint, who was born at Bawburgh of wealthy parents, renounced his patrimony at the age of twelve and applied himself to a life of manual labour in the fields at Taverham, near Cossey, depriving himself of his daily food that he might have to give to those who needed it, and going barefoot that he might thus have more of his scanty wages to bestow on any who asked an alms of him. He died in 1016, whilst working in the meadows, and was buried at Bawburgh. A well at Cossey still bears his name.

S. WERBURGH. Abbess (died 699).

See Part I, p. 248.

S. WILFRID. Bishop (died 711).

See Part I, p. 76.

S. WILLEHAD. Missionary Bishop (died 789).

This Northumbrian priest, eager to carry on the work for which S. Boniface had not long since laid down his life, journeyed in the year 770 to Friesland and settled himself near the scene of that Saint's martyrdom, where he preached for a time with considerable success, till in 782 the Saxon rebellion under Witikind, during which many of his converts were slain, caused him to flee for protection to Charlemagne.

Three years later, after Charlemagne had subdued the Saxon insurrection, S. Willehad returned to the field of his labours, where it is said that he thenceforth enjoyed the hearty support of his former persecutor, Witikind. In 787 S. Willehad was consecrated Bishop of Bremen, but within

little over two years, whilst visiting his diocese, he was seized with a violent fever of which he died on 8 November, 789, only a week after the consecration of his cathedral church.

S. WILLIAM. Child Martyr (died 1137).

This youthful Saint is said to have been apprenticed to a tanner at Norwich, in whose employ his gentle disposition endeared him to his masters and to his fellow-labourers alike.

Legend states that just before Easter, 1137, when the boy was still only twelve years of age, he was enticed into the house of a wealthy Jew in Norwich, where he was subjected, as in the case of S. Hugh of Lincoln, to all the incidents of the Passion. Nothing appears to have been discovered concerning his fate until five years later, when a citizen, who had been bribed to secrecy, before his death revealed the crime to a priest, and described to the latter the exact spot in the wood where the little martyr had been buried. S. William's remains were thereupon removed first to the cathedral churchyard and later to the choir of the church itself.

S. WILLIAM. Archbishop (died 1154).
See Part I, p. 129.

S. WILLIBALD. Missionary Bishop (died 790).
See Part I, p. 173.

S. WILLIBROD. Missionary Bishop (died 739).
See Part I, p. 164.

S. WINIBALD. Missionary Abbot (died 761).
See Part I, p. 173.

S. WISTAN. King and Martyr (died 850).

Owing to the early death of his father Wigmund, the son of Wiglaf, his son Wistan succeeded his grandfather Wiglaf, while yet a child, upon the throne of Mercia, which, notwithstanding his youth, he occupied, under the regency of his mother Elfleda with such dignity and prudence as to win for himself the love and respect of all his subjects. But amongst his mother's counsellors was Bertwulf, the brother of the late King, who desired, as a first step to the usurpation of the kingdom, to marry Elfleda, the mother of his great-nephew, who, finding himself foiled in this attempt by her refusal to marry within the prohibited degrees, determined to compass his object by some other means. He therefore commissioned his own son, Bertfrith, to entice his young cousin to a conference in some secluded spot, and there to murder him (1 June, 850). S. Wistan was buried first at Repton and afterwards at Evesham.

S. WITHBURGA. Recluse (died 743).

This youngest daughter of Anna, King of East Anglia, retired from the world at her father's death and proceeded to found a convent at Dereham in Norfolk. An old legend relates that here, in answer to the Saint's prayers, she and her companions were supplied with milk by two wild does which presented themselves daily at a neighbouring fountain, until the owner of the land, who, for some unknown reason, appears to have held S. Withburga in contempt, ordered that they should be hunted away by his dogs. It is said

that the landlord was soon afterwards punished for his cruelty by a fatal fall from his horse.

S. Withburga died at Dereham in 743, but her remains were stolen thence in 974 by order of Abbot Brithnoth, who desired to lay them beside those of her sisters, S. Etheldreda and S. Sexburga, in his Abbey Church at Ely.

S. WULFHAD. Martyr (late seventh century).

See S. Werburgh, Part I, p. 248.

S. WULFHILDA. Abbess (died between 980 and 990).

A nun of Winchester, who is said to have evaded with great difficulty the unworthy offers of King Edgar, who became at length so impressed by her resolution to adhere to her religious vows, that he desisted from all further attempts to molest her and even helped her to restore the ancient Monastery of Barking in Essex and to found that of Horton in Dorset, over both of which she ruled as Abbess. After the death of King Edgar, owing to the jealousy of Queen Elfreda, S. Wulfhilda was expelled from her two convents, but on the accession of Ethelred the Unready, on the very day that she had previously foretold, she was again restored to her former dignity, and died at Barking, during the reign of this King, between the years 980 and 990.

Some authorities identify this Wulfhilda with Wilfrida, the mother of S. Edith of Wilton.

S. WULSTAN. Bishop (died 1095).

See Part I, p. 122.

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